Minutes of the
Meeting of the Executive Committee
of the World Council of Churches
17-23 November, 2016
Shanghai and Nanjing, People's Republic of China

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1. Prayers

On 17 November, the executive committee met for prayers at the offices of the China Christian Council (CCC) in Shanghai. The scripture readings were Psalm 103:1-14, Proverbs 14:21, and Luke 10:25-37. Rev. Kan Baoping (China Christian Council) offered a reflection based on the theme "go and do likewise". He reflected on the call to love one another: this can be easy. He noted, however, that love by action can be more difficult. Christians talk about love a great deal. Loving one another is not just about loving other Christians; rather, Jesus said to love your neighbours no matter the situation. It is good to ask ourselves who our neighbours are. Jesus taught us to love one another like in the parable of the Good Samaritan; we need to help people who are in need. In the China Christian Council, on 17 October each year, there is a day when people are particularly encouraged to serve the poor. He concluded by sharing that charity work is not a means to evangelism; we must love and serve one another.

On 18 November, the executive committee met for prayers at the Jinling Riverside Hotel in Nanjing. The scripture readings were Psalm 121 and Genesis 12:1-4a. A written reflection noted that the narrative of the lives of Abram (Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah) are often understood as an example on how to become men and women of faith. God called Abram to go to the unnamed, unknown land and he did go without question. God promised to bless Abram and made him a great nation. However God also said that through Abram "all the families of the earth shall be blessed". In other words, together with God's promise, there is a task that is involved. As Jione Havea wrote, "Abram is commissioned to be a platform, or bed, upon which blessings arrive". Abram is not called to occupy the land and take control over the people in which he goes and lives, but to be a channel of God's blessings in the "pilgrimage of blessings". After reading the written reflection, the committee was given two questions to reflect upon: in what ways does the passage (Genesis 12:1-4a) speak to me? What does the call to leave home, to go to the unknown land, to be blessed, and to be a blessing for other people mean to me as a pilgrim? After some silent reflection upon the two questions, the executive committee members were invited to share their thoughts with the persons sitting next to them.

On 19 November, the executive committee met for prayers at the Jinling Riverside Hotel in Nanjing. The scripture readings were Psalm 143, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, and Luke 9:1-6. After the gospel reading, the executive committee was invited into a time of silent reflection.

On 20 November, the executive committee attended church services with local congregations in Nanjing. Half of the executive committee attended the Mochoulu Church, and the other half attended St. Paul's Church. After the church services, the executive committee members received guided tours of the church buildings, learned about the history of the congregations, and were hosted for lunch.

On 21 November, the executive committee met for prayers at the Jinling Riverside Hotel in Nanjing. The scripture readings were Psalm 95:1-7, Colossians 1:11-20, and Luke 23:33-43.

On 22 November, the executive committee met for prayers at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, and were joined by faculty and students from the seminary. Student choirs led songs throughout the service. The scripture readings were Psalm 100, 1 Peter 1:3-9, and Romans 15:13. Rev. Dr Wen Ge, one of the professors from the seminary and a former Bossey student, offered a reflection. He noted that 1 Peter is sometimes called a book of encouragement, pilgrimage, and hope. The author was encouraging people to be strong in the midst of difficulties. He remarked that we are given a living hope: in the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, how can a living hope help us? He reflected that there are four features

of a living hope: 1) it comes out of God's grace; 2) it is based on Christ's resurrection from the dead: new life can re-emerge from death, and ultimately, justice and peace will have victory over evil; 3) it is an undefiled and unfailing inheritance: a transformed world of justice and peace on earth; and 4) it always points to an active and dynamic reality: God is making living hope dynamic, and God has promised a guaranteed future of living hope. Living hope exists to transform the world into God's household of justice and peace. He concluded with the blessing: may the God of hope fill us with justice and peace so that we may abound in living hope.

On 23 November, the committee met for prayers at the Jinling Riverside Hotel in Nanjing. The scripture readings were Isaiah 61:1-3, Psalm 113, and Luke 5:27-32. After the gospel reading, the executive committee was invited to spend some time in silent reflection.

2. Opening Actions

2.1 WELCOME BY MODERATOR

Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya), moderator of the central committee, moderated a hearing session.

She welcomed everyone to the executive committee meeting. She also welcomed the general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, Dr Mathews George, as well as the WCC staff. She offered thanks to God for travelling mercies. She expressed her gratitude to the China Christian Council (CCC) for hosting this meeting, and offered thanks for their generous hospitality. She noted that it is an honour to be here in China. She wanted to really appreciate all of the efforts by the hosts and by the members of the executive committee. She added that this is important point in our journey on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

2.2 ROLL CALL

Dr Abuom invited the WCC general secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit to read the roll call.

The general secretary first welcomed everyone to the meeting and also offered thanks for the efforts of the hosts, as well as staff, to prepare this meeting. He shared that this is not only a meeting of the executive committee, but is also an encounter with a member church.

He read out the list of participants, and announced apologies for the meeting. The full list of participants is in Appendix I.

It was noted that apologies were received from the following members of the committee:

- H.G. Archbishop Nareg Alemezian
- Bishop Samuel Robert Azariah
- Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber
- Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev
- Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang
- Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou
- H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste

- Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko
- Bishop John F. White

2.3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Dr Abuom moderated a decision-making session. The proposed agenda was approved.

2.4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr Abuom asked if there were any changes that would need to be made to the minutes of the executive committee meeting held in Trondheim, Norway, 20-21 June, 2016, and whether these minutes represent a true record of the meeting.

It was moved by Rev. Dr Paul Gardner (Moravian Church in Jamaica), and seconded by H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin]) that the minutes be adopted. The minutes were approved by consensus. Dr Abuom noted that issues arising from the last minutes should already be captured on the agenda; but invited people to name any issues that were not captured. No additional issues arising were noted.

2.5 APPROVAL OF SUB-COMMITTEES (MEMBERSHIP)

Dr Abuom asked for the approval of the sub-committee membership.

The membership of the sub-committees was approved by consensus. A full list of sub-committee membership is in Appendix II.

Before moving to another item on the agenda, Dr Audeh B. Quawas (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem) noted a concern to be recorded in the minutes. He shared that in the morning's prayer, on the first day of the meeting, included prayers about sexual orientation. He noted that we as the WCC have not come to consensus about this issue; therefore, he hopes that we will not pray about this again until the WCC has a clear position about sexual orientation. He wanted to acknowledge that he has reservations about the content of this aspect of the prayers.

Dr Abuom noted that the WCC does not have a clear decision or consensus about sexual orientation. She reflected that the staff need to pay attention to content, even in worship material, because the WCC has not taken a stand on this.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that the prayer from the morning was a prayer for people living in difficult circumstances. He also noted that we do have a human sexuality reference group. He thinks it is acceptable to pray for people who are excluded. He clarified that this is not a change in policy of the WCC; rather, it is a pastoral concern that we prayed about.

Dr Quawas shared that this is against the principles and beliefs of his church, and he cannot pray for people who are going against his church's belief. If it was in another terminology and another wording, he would not object. He feels that we would be encouraging different sexual orientations.

Dr Abuom noted that this concern will be recorded in the minutes.

Rev. Dr Paul Gardner also registered a comment. He wanted to go back to the biblical text itself and the morning prayers to see again what was prayed for. He shared that the prayer is not supporting any particular sexual orientation; it is a prayer that recognized that there are people in the world who are excluded because of their lifestyles. This is a different matter. He shared that he is in support of such a prayer because it does not speak to a particular theological position or decision that the WCC is making.

Dr Abuom offered thanks for this observation.

Dr Quawas shared that, by the explanation of the colleague and friend, a different religion is the same as a different sexual orientation. The prayer was "we pray for those we might cross the road to avoid: who have been excluded because of their race, their religion, their financial and social status, their sexual orientation, or their history…" He shared that these are normal points of exclusion. It would mean that you are also recognizing different sexual orientations, which we are not yet recognizing as the WCC.

Dr Abuom shared noted his point for recording in the minutes.

Dr Quawas stated that staff has to take care not to include this again. He reflected that the controversial issue of sexual orientation should not be part of the prayers until the WCC takes a position on this.

2.6 SHARING BY MEMBERS

Several members of the leadership of the China Christian Council (CCC) were present when the executive committee moved into its time of sharing. Dr Abuom invited the executive committee members to share about what is on their hearts that would be good for the CCC and the other members of the executive committee to hear.

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson (United Methodist Church) shared firstly, how very much they have appreciated the partnership and publishing of the Bibles that happens with the CCC. Leaders from the CCC have been able to come to the United States and to talk about the publishing and distribution of Bibles around the world; the growth of this is truly remarkable. Secondly, she reflected that they are grateful that leadership from the WCC came to the United States last spring to be in solidarity with the churches there, particularly around the issues of racism. This meant so very much to them. Now with the new President-Elect of the United States, the fear is high of racial injustice, hurt, and prejudice because of people's race or because they are immigrants. She asked for prayers for the country.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Aykazian reflected that Bishop Swenson has presented the most important challenge that people are facing in the United States right now. He thanked the WCC for coming to the United States earlier in the year and would also like to encourage this kind of visit to anywhere there are difficulties. He believes that the Holy Spirit will penetrate through the leadership of the United States; still, he would invite prayers for the leadership of the country.

Dr Abuom reminded the committee that the WCC had prioritized three countries in Africa for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Nigeria. She shared that the general secretary would say more about Nigeria later in the meeting. She noted that staff has been to Nigeria earlier this year to officially mark the opening of the interfaith centre.

In terms of South Sudan, she noted that the war has been raging on, and a few weeks ago, the Sudan Council of Churches was hosted by the Vatican and the Pope; together, they explored ways of finding peace. The Sudan Council of Churches brings together all of the main confessions of faith in the country. The WCC has been trying to accompany churches in South Sudan, including through the specialized ministries. The general secretary of ACT Alliance visited there recently to consider how to address very serious humanitarian issues, both inside and outside. There are three camps in Uganda that are overflowing with refugees coming from South Sudan.

Dr Abuom shared that just over a week ago, there was a visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo organized with the WCC and the All Africa Council of Churches (AACC). This is a way in which the ecumenical family encourages member churches to work towards free, fair and peaceful elections next year.

Dr Abuom also shared that in her own country, Kenya, this year they had a successful election of the next archbishop of the Anglican Church: The Most Rev. Dr Jackson Ole Sapit. Right now, the archbishop is in a listening mode to hear about what the different constituencies want to do for the next ten years.

Additionally, Dr Abuom noted, the WCC sent a delegation to Ethiopia where they met with church leaders about the recent crisis that has been brewing there. It was an important visit, because the WCC was able to again reaffirm its commitment to accompany the member churches and the Christian communities in their search for justice and peace.

Dr Abuom observed that it is important to see the individual actions of member churches in search of peace and justice. At the end of this month, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) convenes to reflect on the African Union Vision 2063, which is the Africa We Want. She is from Africa and has come to China, and wanted to indicate the increasing presence of the Chinese government and business in Africa, although they have not quite connected with the church in the same way. She feels that it will be interesting to hear more from the CCC.

Rev. Dr Micheline Kamba Kasongo (Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa) added more about the visit of the AACC to the Congo last week. It was a good visit. When the AACC came, all church leaders welcomed the AACC leaders. The leadership of the Église du Christ au Congo (The Church of Christ in Congo) was there. The church in Congo is divided. This division is very difficult. She is glad that next month, church leaders from Congo have been invited to Addis Abba to talk about the election; she hopes that this will help unite us. The church is divided, and so she invites our prayers.

Dr Quawas wanted to thank the CCC for their invitation, and to ask them for help from the region in the Middle East. Everywhere in the Middle East there is war and challenge to the Christian presence. The CCC can play an excellent role in strengthening the Christian presence in the region. He would like to see them supporting and strengthening Christians in the Middle East region.

Rev. Dr Hyunju Bae (Presbyterian Church of Korea) shared that a conference was held in Hong Kong this past week from 14-16 November called the International Ecumenical Conference on a Peace Treaty for the Korean Peninsula. The conference was organized by the WCC and hosted by the Hong Kong Christian Council. There were about 58 participants in total, including representatives from the WCC, members of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA), the Ecumenical Forum for Korea, and churches from North America and Europe. The chairpersons of the world YWCA and YMCA

were also there. She wanted to thank everyone for the faithful follow-up to the statement that was adopted at the WCC Busan Assembly on the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. She shared that it will be really great to learn about Christian perspectives of enhancing peace in the North East Asian context.

Rev. Cora Luisa Antonio Matamoros (Moravian Church in Nicaragua) offered thanks to the CCC for hosting us, and especially for their work around the Bible translations. She noted that on Sunday, November 6 there was election of the government in Nicaragua. The Indigenous Peoples were angry because those elected were a husband and wife. They do not want a husband and wife to be in the presidency and vice-presidency. She asked for prayers from everywhere for her people.

She also noted that the issue of sexuality is an issue all around the world. In some countries, it is very deep concern. For example, from where she comes from, a woman's sexuality was very badly understood; people did not see her as a child of God.

Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká (Czechoslovak Hussite Church) shared from the Czech Republic. In 2017, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the first two women's ordination in the Hussite Church. They were ordained two years after the World War II. She asked about how women are involved in other churches. This is also connected with the youth involvement which she is very much concerned about and interested in.

Rev. Dr Paul Gardner shared that in conjunction with the Caribbean Council of Churches, they are planning a faith-based consultation, which he has been asked to chair, to look at how faith leaders are responding to the issue of HIV/AIDS. This is important work in the Caribbean. He comes to it from two perspectives: one, he chairs the Jamaica civil society coalition, and two, as a church leader. He would like to see how we can bridge the divide between the church's attitude and civil society's response. It has been challenging to bring the different sides together not for acceptance, but for tolerance and to be a space where we can listen to each other and to recognize the humanity within all of us.

Rev. Taaroanui Maraea (Maòhi Protestant Church) shared that a few days ago he was in New Zealand with the Pacific Conference of Churches. There were big problems and big issues. There is also the question about the referendum in New Caledonia, and the decision about the French government regarding nuclear testing.

Rev. Dr Michael Tita (Romanian Orthodox Church) mentioned the major event which took place in the Orthodox world last June that had an impact on relations with other churches and in the ecumenical movement in general. The Romanian Orthodox Church was one of ten churches meeting in Crete. They had a session regarding the documents adopted in Crete. They affirmed that the documents that were approved could be further clarified and given nuances so that people could better understand them. That way, the worries and concerns that some people would have in relation to the ecumenical relations will be somehow clarified.

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo wanted to share about the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocates Network (EDAN). They have a new executive secretary for EDAN replacing Sam Kabue. Most members of EDAN wanted the offices to move from Africa and to Asia, Europe or America. Some also wanted the offices to move from an Anglophone to a Francophone context. They are happy now to have a woman in leadership since the new secretary of EDAN will be Ms Angeline Okola Charles. Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo offered thanks to those who named Ms Okola Charles to her position.

Mrs Margarita Nelyubova (Russian Orthodox Church [Moscow Patriarchate]) shared that they are celebrating 140 years of the translation of the Holy Bible used by all Christian confessions in Russia. It is something that really unites them.

Mrs Nelyubova also noted that there was an action in October when Christian churches of Syria of different denominations organized an action for the children. Several thousand children in several cities in Syria made drawings calling for peace. The leaders of the churches in Syria packed all of the drawings together and brought them to Brussels, met with European Union; they also came to Geneva, and met with the United Nations. They asked for peace and for people to help stop the war.

Regarding the conference in Hong Kong about peace in the Korea peninsula, Mrs Nelyubova reflected that, several years ago, the Russian Orthodox Church was involved in trying to bring about peaceful settlement in Korea, so she was surprised not to see Russian participants on the list of those who attended.

Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins (Christian Church [Disciples of Christ] in the United States) shared that churches in the United States are reeling after the recent presidential election, and are trying to make sense of it and trying to discern what their role is as people of faith. Things now seem fraught with new challenges. Many people are concerned, and this is quite a challenge.

Rev. Dr Watkins also noted that she had just come from the governing board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA), and she brings heartfelt and warm greetings from them. As the NCC, they continue to rejoice in the solidarity visit from the WCC related to racial justice in the United States. The NCCCUSA discussed the visit, and have appointed a task force to think together with some of the ecumenical partners about how they might move forward seriously in this area, in terms of taking some leadership and immediate action. Combined with the recent election, it is all the more critical that churches in the United States do work in their own country toward racial justice.

Bishop Swenson asked if the NCCCUSA discussed standing in solidarity with the Indigenous People at Standing Rock, Sioux Nation, in North Dakota in the United States, who are peacefully protesting against the proposed construction of the Dakota Access pipeline (DAPL). This pipeline, connecting production fields in North Dakota to refineries in Illinois, would run alongside the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and traverse the Missouri River. Rev. Dr Watkins shared that they did not articulate a strategy about Standing Rock, but they did talk about the need to work towards justice with Indigenous Peoples and the need for justice for the planet; this is also intertwined with the movement towards racial justice.

Dr Abuom invited people to observe a moment of silence to thank God for all that was discussed and to also reflect on the prayer requests that were shared.

3. Report of the General Secretary

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate), vice-moderator of the central committee, moderated a hearing session. He welcomed the members of the executive committee who had arrived after the start of the meeting.

He invited the general secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, to present his report.

3.1 GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

1. Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace needed more than ever

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is gaining momentum and becoming more and more an expression where we focus and how we relate to one another in the ecumenical movement. As people of faith, as churches searching for the way forward together in our ministry to the Triune God, we are committed to the "kingdom of God (that) is justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Recently we have seen concrete expressions of this pilgrimage. For example, the joint commemoration in Lund, Sweden, of 500 years since the Reformation, was accountable to the past in appreciation of the shared gifts of the Gospel and with a shared confession for the divisions, searching for new ways forward together. The language, the prayers, and the gestures were those of pilgrims, serving the one ecumenical movement for unity, justice and peace.

There are other events in the world during these last weeks that more than ever call for a renewed and strengthened commitment to be together searching justice and peace – for all. I have welcomed the election of Mr António Guterres as the new UN Secretary General. We know him as a strong advocate for justice and peace, particularly through his work as High Commissioner for Refugees, and for his understanding of the potential for cooperation and walking together with faith-based communities and organisations.

The prophetic role of the church continues to be faithful both speaking the truth and building bridges between peoples. In regions of increased violence, conflict, and war, particularly in Syria, people are struggling for their lives and their future, many hostages of war or refugees are seeking new homes. We have been working out the conditions for religious communities and groups to remain in Iraq after the liberation from occupation by terrorist organizations, and we will present the outcome of these studies in the near future. We are continuing our efforts to work for a real just peace in Israel and Palestine (see below). Also in other parts of the world, in countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Colombia, Ukraine and others, we are working together with our member churches to call for unity and a just peace. What that means will be elaborated as we seek to find our common calling. The WCC is with them as a fellowship of churches in prayer, dialogue, service and advocacy.

The election to the office of President of the United States, which has often been seen as the most powerful position in the world, has caused many reactions, and even fear. In times like these, there are many who ask what a victory, based on white privilege and sexism, will mean for the situation of on-going racial discrimination and blatant gender injustice and other conflicts in the USA and elsewhere, what a denial of commitment to the climate change agreement from Paris will mean for the urgent needs for common action, and what stigmatization of religious and ethnic groups will mean in the USA and globally. In this situation, it is important to continue the pilgrimage of justice and peace, showing that the churches together are faithful to their calling to be ambassadors for righteousness and reconciliation, creating a real community of women and men, and being the voice of those who most need more justice and care. We express our support and prayers for our member churches in the USA. The church should be a fellowship in which all can express their fears and be helped to see that there is a moral platform and commitment that is solid and sustainable. We can deal with many worries if we remain together and do not try to solve my fear by increasing your fear.

Even more, the churches must be faithful to our common ecumenical heritage and commitment in our faith in God. We do not gain in dignity primarily through our belonging to this or that group or by having this or that privilege (or lack of such) but in being created in the image of God. We are not justified by our merits of being great or strong but rather in receiving God's grace in Jesus Christ. This makes us more sensitive to the needs of all for dignity, for human rights, for reconciliation, for justice, for peace, for a common hope for all.

This is also true in many parts of the world where the gaps between groups of people are widening. The times really call us to be signs of hope, giving account of the hope that is within us through our faith and our actions for transformation. In times like these, it is important for the churches to be alert to worrying signs of increased tensions between groups or tribes, of growing separation and nationalism, bigotry and hate-speech, even among those with the strongest political power. The churches are called to deal with the fear of many, on all sides of conflicts and amongst those fleeing from the conflicts.

As we meet here, the COP 22 meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco, is addressing how the now-ratified Paris agreement from last year is to be implemented. There is no time to waste and no reason to take steps backward; our future and that of our children and grandchildren is at stake. Many are troubled and fear for the future of our common home, the earth. Individuals, religious groups, companies, and governments – all have to take the right steps forward now. One of the steps taken by the WCC during this last month in this respect, was to become part of the "Blue Community" that particularly focuses on protection and distribution of the shrinking water resources in the world. These problems are both a cause and an effect of climate change. We are in this network affirming our previous commitments to advocate for access to water as a human right, promoting access to clean and affordable water, and committing ourselves not to use bottled water if we have access to drinking water otherwise. New fountains have been installed in the Ecumenical Centre. The event celebrating this was both an inspiration for the staff community in Geneva and for partners in this significant network (in which, for example the cities of Paris and Bern are members). We encourage churches to consider doing the same.

We are not called to provide superficial optimism or selfish protection of our interests but to search for the common good and the proper relationships among all groups of people, providing the perspective of hope through our words, attitudes and actions. Our common efforts, our ecumenical moves together are possible and needed. In the name of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, we have something to share and something to hope, for all.

We are meeting in a region of the world where many are living in a militarized context that causes fear. The relationships between the peoples and the nations here must be addressed through political and diplomatic means, and the WCC has always called for non-armed solutions to conflicts. That is also why we continue our efforts together with the churches all over the world and also in this region to work for just peace, bringing tensions and conflicts to an end through peace treaties. Among the on-going commitments is to be with all of the Korean people. The WCC seeks to establish another level of trust and relationship that serves the future peace and justice for the whole Korean peninsula and all countries in this region.

2. Since Trondheim

The work since the Central Committee in Trondheim, Norway, has been inspired by the good experiences of that meeting. I rejoice that the meeting was focused on our common agenda through many important discussions, on the work that we reported on, on the plans for the next years, and on our growing common

understanding of the progress and the meaningful dimensions of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. We had challenges to deal with, and we did it together. One of these challenges was the re-election of the executive committee. I find that the WCC is now in the middle of a productive and creative phase, spending our time and resources on the many important tasks of being a leading agent in the one ecumenical movement and a fellowship of churches.

The evaluation of the meeting in Trondheim by the participants was by and large very positive. We have thanked the Church of Norway, the government of Norway, and our partners in Trondheim for their warm hospitality, for making the meeting flow smoothly, for solid financial and practical support and for making the connections between our meeting and the life of the church, the city, the worship life in the churches, and the mid-summer celebrations.

We have been working hard since then – after some good weeks of summer vacation – to follow up and implement the decisions of the meeting, in addition to implementing the plans you already have approved for this year. We are reporting on that in several of the documents prepared for this meeting.

3. Meeting in China

The invitation to come to China is highly appreciated and received with great joy, not only by the members of the executive committee but widely in the WCC and the ecumenical family. We hope and pray that this meeting and the visit to the church and to the encounter with the China Christian Council (CCC), the Christian institutions, and with the authorities in this country will lead to closer relations, deeper understanding of China, and to new commitments to our common Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Now we have the first meeting of a governing body of the World Council of Churches in China. This is a historic moment, which we note with great pleasure and satisfaction. It is a result of twenty-five years of membership in the WCC of the China Christian Council, our host for this meeting. Since the assembly in Canberra in 1991, they have been part of the WCC fellowship. This is a sign of the development of the ecumenical movement, and we are grateful to be part of the remarkable growth and development of the church in this great country with the largest population in the world. The call to be church is very meaningful also in a country where many are searching for spiritual resources and need the church's commitment to social service and building fellowship among people of all ages. We are inspired by seeing and hearing what the church is doing in this country, and we call for stronger cooperation from the worldwide fellowship with the church here.

China has experienced enormous economic growth over the last decades. Hundreds of thousands have been moving out of poverty. This is beneficial for the people of this country but remarkable also for the global quest to overcome and eradicate poverty. The growing gaps between rich and poor everywhere in the world – also here – have to be diminished for the wellbeing of all and for the sustainability of the whole society. The challenges to the environment as a side effect of increased economic activity, production, and transportation, are challenges for this country and for many others. The ratification of the Paris Agreement on the fourth of this month was done with significant support and commitment from China.

The importance of ecumenical and international relations is acknowledged by the church and the authorities in China, and we believe that the WCC is a natural and relevant partner, and our fellowship of churches is a platform for mutual sharing of our lives and our faith also with the significant Christian population of this country.

The connection to the Amity Foundation, which has also established an office in our Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, is promising; and we have received their application to become officially an International Ecumenical Organization in partnership with the WCC.

4. Visiting member churches

As colleagues in the staff community we have agreed to share the responsibility for relations with member churches among us, and the tasks are taken up by colleagues in relation to their work as programme executives or as leadership. This is done according to our overall strategy of connecting the programme work more closely to the life of the member churches. It is also a matter of using the available resources in the best ways. We have been working on a Code of Conduct on how colleagues plan, perform, and report about such visits.

The relationship to the member churches is also addressed through increased communication activity and though specific focus on them and their work as part of the WCC. This happens through many channels, and we receive significant feedback from member churches in this way. As before, we also relate to the member churches through updates from the central committee members and regular correspondence on their membership contributions. We have more examples of sharing some of the personnel resources with member churches for certain tasks. There are many churches that responded positively to our efforts to stabilize or increase their financial contributions to the WCC, according to the initiatives we have decided upon. But there are still many member churches from all confessional families and continents which could contribute more regularly and some more substantially. We are working on an even more elaborate model for relating to member churches, and we have identified and addressed the need for even better coordination of such activities and our database for our information about them.

Several of our colleagues and also some delegations have been visiting member churches in recent months. Prof. Dr Isabel Phiri and Father Dr Daniel Buda visited the churches in Mauritius and in Madagascar; many years had passed since the last visit of this kind. The need to relate to the churches directly and not only through some correspondence was expressed in their appreciation for the visit.

A delegation, led by Dr Agnes Abuom, visited the member churches in Ethiopia recently. This included meetings with the government to address the situation of growing political tension and violence in this huge country in Africa.

I have, together with colleagues responsible for related projects and for the country, visited Nigeria for several days in August. I particularly visited the headquarters of the Methodist Church of Nigeria in Lagos, where I was welcomed by Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko and many of his colleagues. He has apologized for his absence in this meeting as he is in the process of transferring to his new calling as Archbishop of Umuhuia. We extend our congratulations to him!

I also attended the great annual feast of the Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide, a remarkable event of prayer, worship, fellowship and new commitment of faith. In the programme of the visit, primarily hosted by the Christian Council of Nigeria, we also met with and worshipped with the (Christian) vice-president of Nigeria, Oluyemi Oluleke Osinbajo, in Abuja. He thanked the WCC for its strong support for initiatives for peace in their country.

The longest and most substantial visit I made to member churches since last June is the almost two-week pilgrimage to the member churches in New Zealand/Aotearoa and Australia (for details see the Appendix III). In both countries I met with many audiences made up of well informed, committed and very interested partners in the ecumenical movement, of church leaders, ordained and lay, with professors, students and others. Even if they are and might feel they are far away from Geneva and from many of the other members of the WCC, they are well updated and very much appreciative of the efforts to strengthen the relationships and to elaborate more what the pilgrimage means as an ecumenical approach and programme.

In New Zealand/Aotearoa, I was deeply moved by the strong Maori dimension of the life of the churches and how this is an acknowledged and integrated aspect of the life of the churches there as well as in society in general. It is probably the most visible and most just society I have seen for Indigenous Peoples. In Christchurch we saw the churches' roles in building up a city after the powerful earthquake registered five years ago. We also agreed that there should be a visit the churches in the Pacific region next year, where the issues of climate change and climate refugees should be particularly addressed – also in their impact on New Zealand/Aotearoa. We are talking not about the future but about the current effects of climate change.

The refugee situation was an underlying theme in many conversations in Australia, in some cases, like Canberra, addressed directly. Their record for welcoming the stranger and the newcomer in need of a new home, for which Australia is so well known, has been abruptly terminated by the unacceptable practice of keeping refugees and asylum seekers in detention centres far away from the mainland. The situation for the aboriginal peoples of first nations is still a wound in this nation.

The churches in Australia are quite committed to the ecumenical agenda, particularly on the local and state level, but also have a great desire to work with us at the global level. In several cases I was asked either to give lectures or sermons, or to initiate discussions and sharing about the WCC and our and my vision for church unity. I raised the awareness of the on-going hearing on *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* and I elaborated why I believe ecumenical attitudes and particularly mutual accountability are needed in our time to pursue visible unity in faith, witness and service. The Uniting Church in Australia is a powerful member church with a strong leadership in the different states, and I had the opportunity to meet with all their general secretaries in a conversation about unity, consensus practices, Israel/Palestine, Syria, refugees and other issues, organized by Rev. Dr Andrew Williams in Sydney. The presence of many Orthodox churches and growing members particularly from the Middle East, is a significant dimension of the ecumenical landscape in Australia. For example I was hosted by the Coptic bishop in their church in Adelaide. In Melbourne I was hosted in St Paul's Cathedral by Bishop Philip Huggins, Dean of the Cathedral and Primate Philip Freier, who is Archbishop of Melbourne, a former Ecumenical Officer for the Anglican Church. We had an open and lively conversation in the cathedral after the ecumenical evensong at which Archbishop Freier also presided.

The visits to Lund, Sweden, and to Heidelberg and Karlsruhe, Germany, were both events related to the 500 Years of Reformation. The Church of Sweden hosted a remarkable event organized by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, led by the president and the general secretary of the LWF and H.H. Pope Francis. The role of the churches receiving the results of the ecumenical dialogues became visible, as well as the commitment to make the results of dialogue a pilgrimage from conflict to communion. In Heidelberg I had the privilege of speaking on the issue of Reformation in an ecumenical perspective; and I focused on how Luther called for penitence as a life-long attitude of accountability to God, to others and ourselves, and thus had an intention that also corresponds

to the purpose of the ecumenical movement in its many aspects. In Geneva we co-hosted events earlier this month with the Swiss Protestant churches and the EKD, marking the start of the year of commemorations of the Reformation. Together with the leaders of these two churches, we participated in the discussions and facilitated reflections on impulses from the reformers for our ecumenical work today for justice and peace.

Other significant recent encounters with member churches included meeting with the heads of the member churches in Brazil, discussing their role in the present developments in that country. Another was the meeting with the Orthodox church leaders based in the vicinity of New York, organized by Most Rev. H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian and newly elected member of the executive committee, Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul. I also attended a high-profile event organized by the Focolare movement in Munich in July, where several leading personalities from churches in Europe were present, among them H.E. Cardinal Koch and H.E. Cardinal Marx from the Roman Catholic Church, the Chair of the Council of EKD, Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, and others.

In September, together with the NCCCUSA, we organized a consultation in Washington, DC, USA, on the situation in Israel and Palestine, with participants from the constituencies in the USA as well as in Israel and Palestine. The newly appointed moderator of the CCIA commission, Rev. Frank Chikane, attended the consultation and offered significant contributions from his experience in the South Africa struggle against apartheid and the ecumenical cooperation of those days. There were also representatives from the African American churches in the USA, who also brought important insight to the connection between the civil rights movement and the current struggle against racism, and the dividing reality between the peoples in Israel and Palestine. I attended and participated in all discussions, offering the WCC perspective and commitment for a just peace in the region. The statement published in the end expressed our concern and a call to move toward justice for the sake of peace, for the benefit of all peoples in the Holy Land. The upcoming 50th anniversary of the current occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank was also raised. The particular role of the USA and the significance of the churches in that country as agents of just peace were highlighted.

In December I have scheduled a visit of members of the WCC staff leadership group and other staff to Jerusalem and to Ramallah, to meet with church leaders, staff, partners, and political leaders on both sides, and others with whom we are working. This arises as part of a follow-up to the extensive evaluation report of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) that is also presented to the executive committee. We learned a great deal from this report about what is needed to redefine the original purpose and profile of this very significant programme for the WCC, as an ecumenical initiative under the WCC, called for by local churches and pursued in close cooperation with member churches and other ecumenical partners. I believe this report and the follow-up will strengthen the programme, together with changes being made these days in the staffing of the programme.

5. Meeting with ecumenical partners

The first weeks of September I dedicated to meetings with global ecumenical partners based on invitations to the World Methodist Council (WMC) in Houston, Texas, USA, and to the World Pentecostal Fellowship in São Paulo, Brazil. The meeting with the WMC was an opportunity to meet many people from our own member churches as well as familiar colleagues from past and present, among them the general secretary of WMC, Bishop Ivan Abrahams. The Methodist family is wide and growing in many parts of the world; and it represents a significant part of the WCC constituency and commitment to unity, mutual accountability, common service and witness.

The meeting with our Pentecostal sisters and brothers was scheduled long ago. They meet every third year, and this time it was given priority from my side. The constituency is wide and diverse, and they represent many of the Pentecostal churches that are well established from long ago and have built relationships with many of our member churches. There was a clear agenda in having me and the general secretary of the Global Christian Forum, as well as representatives from LWF, WCRC and other sister organizations present. I addressed the ecumenical dinner and invited them to closer cooperation on issues at stake for all of us, in which our faith in the power of the Holy Spirit is a driving motivation for our involvement, for example in addressing the environmental crisis and climate change.

The event in São Paolo was scheduled for what later became the dates for the assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Our associate general secretary, Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, attended, together with the director of communications, Ms Marianne Ejdersten, and our Middle East colleagues. The meeting was promising for future cooperation and fellowship among the churches in the Middle East, in this particularly challenging time for the churches and Christianity in that part of the world. I have invited the general secretaries of all the Regional Ecumenical Organizations for a three-day consultation in Bossey at the end of next January, to share our agendas and develop our cooperation further. I have invited Dr Mathews George Chunakara, the general secretary of the regional organization for Asia, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), to be with us in this executive committee meeting, since it is taking place in the Asia region.

Another significant event every year for our relations with the Christian World Communions is the annual meeting of the general secretaries and some of their colleagues. This time it was in Rome, at the same time as my scheduled visit to Australia. From the WCC the director of Faith and Order, Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus, participated as did the programme executive responsible for these relations, Ms Natasha Klukach. I have made sure that there are no calendar conflicts for my participation in the next meeting in 2017 in Colombia.

Another event that had significant inter-church dimensions was the prayer for peace in Assisi, thirty years after the first. This was the annual event of Sant'Egidio, calling church and other religious leaders, politicians, and resource persons from different parts of the global society together for reflections and prayers for peace. This time I led a panel discussion on religion and extremism, a very vital discussion for three hours with two Nobel Peace Prize laureates and others present. I also addressed the theme of economic justice in another panel. The Christian prayer was led by H.H. Pope Francis; H.A.H. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios; the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby; the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, H.H. Mor Ignatius Aphrem II; and myself. This was a sign of the new role of the WCC, and very different from the arrangement thirty years ago.

In 2017 there are common dates for Easter and Pentecost for all Christian churches. The Faith and Order proposal for a common date for Easter has been raised again by ecumenical partners, H.H. Pope Tawadros II from Egypt, H.H. Pope Francis, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. I receive several questions on what the WCC is doing to promote this development. I think it is time to raise it again and to try to have some common celebrations next year to promote the process. I propose that there be a common ecumenical celebration of Pentecost in Jerusalem next June.

I very much welcome the proposal to have a joint meeting about *diakonia today* in 2018 with ACT Alliance. The ACT Alliance general secretary, Dr John Nduna, is ending his service with ACT Alliance next year, and we have been informed that it will happen before our next meeting of the executive

committee. We shall use this opportunity to thank him for his long and outstanding service in the ecumenical movement and for the good cooperation with the WCC. The process of finding a successor has started, and we should encourage qualified people to apply.

6. Meetings with inter-faith partners

Launching the Interfaith Centre for Peace and Harmony in Kaduna, Nigeria, was a significant new phase in a long process since a Muslim-Christian visit there four years ago. The initiative has been led by the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) and their Muslim counterpart in Nigeria, supported by the WCC and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman, Jordan. We have channelled financial resources to the initiative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway. The opening of the centre was very well attended by Muslim and Christian leaders of Nigeria, as well as by H.E. Malam Nasir EL-Rufai, governor of Kaduna State. It was recognized as a significant sign of leadership nationally and internationally, addressing violence in the name of religion and against religious groups and people belonging to them, with the aim of exploring new methodologies for dealing with such problems.

In late September we had a three-day visit of the chief cleric of Cairo's prestigious mosque and university, H.E. Professor Dr Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar al Sharif. He was accompanied by several members of the Council of Muslim Elders. They were met by the leadership of the WCC and other representatives from member churches (Egypt, Norway, USA, and Germany). We also had the privilege of sharing reflections and discussing strategies to stop violence from extremists and in the name of religion, as well as initiatives for peace in the Middle East and other conflict areas. The meeting ended with a common statement and a commitment to meet again in Cairo in March 2017. The Grand Imam was also a keynote speaker at the 70th anniversary of Bossey Ecumenical Institute that same weekend.

Since the discussions in Trondheim, I have followed up on relations with members of International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (ICJIC), the Jewish organization for Jewish-Christian dialogue. This has been an open, frank, and constructive dialogue, explaining clearly the problems I addressed in Trondheim. The meeting with a wider group in Brussels in September developed into a fruitful and helpful, honest and forward-looking dialogue. We agreed to continue next year, exploring more in depth what justice and peace mean in our respective faith traditions and in relation to the situation in Israel and Palestine.

The 70 year anniversary of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute was celebrated with several events during the last weekend of September. Former general secretary Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser and other former leading figures in Bossey and the WCC were present. The students participated actively together with alumni and alumnae from Bossey. Bossey appears more alive than ever, with several functions, the most important being to offer education and formation for the churches and the ecumenical movement. We are proud of Bossey, its highly qualified faculty and leadership, its significant group of students from the whole world, and the contribution Bossey makes to many ecumenical processes and events. It also serves as a home for our own meetings and as a guesthouse for others. We are seeing good results from the guesthouse but need to continue efforts to use it more ourselves for our own meetings and consultations.

7. A new phase in the building project

As the executive committee is well aware, we are in a new phase of our building project, waiting for the finalization of the Area Plan Process. That means that we are now proceeding with our discussions on the

financial plans for the project, and during this meeting you are invited to discuss with the steering committee the best options for ensuring a proper outcome, acceptable risks, and the time plan for the next phases. On this issue, see the appendix to my report (Appendix IV).

I am glad to affirm that the contract we made with Implenia for the development of our real estate, again like when it was signed in 2012, is acknowledged as fair and solid by external consultants also in this phase, and we must be clear in our commitment to stay within the conditions given there in our further negotiations with Implenia. It is also important to have more opinions presented, and we have had several meetings with highly qualified consultants lately to prepare for the discussions here. I see very good opportunities for a responsible and profitable development of this asset of the WCC to solve the problem related to our former pension fund and to improve our financial stability beyond the present situation.

8. Conclusion

This meeting of the executive committee brings new dimensions to our work, as we gather here in China and as we welcome new participants in the meeting, replacing other members for this meeting or more permanently. There are still two more meetings in the period of service of the outgoing executive committee. I want to express my sincere gratitude for your willingness to serve in your functions in the executive committee, whether you are a member for some years already or new. The executive committee has a central and critical role in the WCC within our current governing structure, and we all need the responsible and efficient work of this committee. For that we have many of our staff serving us. This time we no longer have the former senior assistant to the general secretary, Rev. Garland Pierce, with us, as these days he is taking over his new position as executive director of the Christian Education Department in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This is also the last meeting of the outgoing deputy general secretary, Georges (Yorgo) Lemopoulos. We owe him a great debt of thanks and appreciation for so many years of service to the executive committee. This meeting has been prepared in close cooperation with Ms Catherine Christ-Taha and with the new director of the office of the general secretariat, Mr Stanley Noffsinger.

The shared wisdom and insight, as well as the faithful commitment, from these two outgoing colleagues, the incoming colleagues, and the remaining colleagues – whether they are present or not – are among the richest dimensions of my work as general secretary.

I welcome you all to our meeting in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3.2 Discussion of the General Secretary's Report

The executive committee discussed the general secretary's report. Their comments related to the following themes:

- United States Presidential Election
- Bottled Water
- Executive Committee Membership
- Middle East Meetings
- Interfaith Issues
- Building Project
- UNICEF partnership work

- Latin America Meetings
- Indigenous Peoples
- Asia Meetings
- Ecological Concerns
- Gender Advisory Group
- Rebuilding Haiti

Comments were received as follows.

- *United States Presidential Election*

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo offered thanks to the general secretary for his report. She referenced the United States and this month's presidential election. The general secretary's report said that we need to be together and that we need to avoid fear. There is fear among Africans; they are worried about the results of the recent election. They are also concerned that the USA is divided. She wondered, whether the churches in the United States are also divided or together. She also shared frustration that the United States does not seem ready for a woman leader.

Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang (Gereja Toraja) offered her thanks to the general secretary for his extensive report. She reflected that the election in the United States also had echoes around the world. There is the global interconnectedness of violence and religious extremism, which is a part of our world. We need to recognize this globally so that we can see the interconnectedness of the issues.

Rev. Dr Tveit noted that it is quite important to hear that the presidential election is not really an American issue, but rather a global issue. He questioned how to address this as a global challenge, and shared that the dividing issues are very strong. He wondered how we deal with this as churches and as people. He stated that this is a sign of developments in many parts of the world.

- *Bottled Water*

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo shared that she would like to know more about the discussion about bottled water in the Ecumenical Centre, about the decision to join the "Blue Community", and about the encouragement to move away from bottled water. She noted that in her programme at the university around social transformation, she also initiated a Japanese system related to a water fountain; she therefore would like to know more about this and the change that the WCC has made about bottled water in their offices.

Rev. Dr Tveit clarified that the "Blue Community" is not an organization but a network of initiatives. It combines work on human rights, water, and working towards not using bottled water when clean tap water is available. He noted that bottled water is also a sign of injustice related to water and is also a huge environmental problem. It is a concrete expression of justice that WCC is part of the wider movement of this initiative.

- *Executive Committee Membership*

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo shared that she was not present at the last executive committee meeting. She heard, however, that she was not renewed as a continuing executive committee member because she does

not have a Schengen visa. She wondered if the visa issue was the reason and expressed her disappointment about not being renewed. She shared that she is an African, a woman, a physically challenged person, and a Congolese, and therefore feels that she is a real channel of blessing of God on the executive committee.

Rev. Dr Tveit noted that this was a decision of the central committee upon recommendations of the governance and nominations committee. For more information about the details of the mid-term election, Dr Kamba Kasongo could talk with Mr Georges Lemopoulos, WCC deputy general secretary.

Dr Quawas stated that the re-election was an issue of rotating members of the executive committee. Rev. Dr Tveit noted that it was related to our rules, and that the whole membership of the executive committee was reconsidered at the last meeting. This, therefore, was not about excluding anyone but rather about rotating members.

- *Middle East Meetings*

Dr Quawas offered thanks to the general secretary for his report. He wanted to put on the table the issue of the meetings in the Middle East. He referenced the proposed joint prayer for the Pentecost celebrations in Jerusalem in June 2017. He noted that this must be according to the Jerusalem status quo. Rev. Dr Tveit shared that with reference to the Pentecost celebrations, they will see if it is feasible.

- *Interfaith Issues*

Dr Quawas then spoke about the meeting with interfaith partners (dialogue with the Grand Imam). He noted that, other than the Egyptians, there are no other Arab Christians present. He underlined that it is important to have other Christians from the Middle East region. While it is important to have Europeans and Americans, however, it is also important to ensure a wider Christian presence from the region.

Rev. Dr Hutabarat-Lebang shared that she comes with a very heavy burden about the situation in Indonesia. There have been many demonstrations in the country including a demonstration of Muslim extremists, and one against the president. There is a polarization of religion. She noted that this is taking place not only in Indonesia, but also in other places. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, and extremists play a role. She is grateful there are still Muslims who work for unity and peace of the nations. But there is a small number of Muslims who are violent. We need to think about this when talk about interfaith issues. She reflected that Indonesia and the United States need to have conversations about how to respond to this. We can have more conversations about religious pluralism.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that he takes these comments about interfaith issues seriously. He noted that the WCC is always trying to incorporate more partners in the discussion. Interfaith issues are not only Middle East issues. As he tried to explain in his report, these are also issues in Africa, United States, and in many other places. It is also a growing tension in places like Australia. The general secretary reflected that we need to be aware of how we pursue the dialogue among ourselves. There is the critical effect of more violence and more extremism. We therefore need to talk about WCC's role and our joint contribution to this.

- *Building Project*

Dr Quawas stated that, as member of the Audit Committee, he understood a different point than was noted in the general secretary's report. Since we will have the opportunity to discuss this further with the Steering Committee, it will be good to have a clear report, particularly since the development project is taking more time than was originally planned.

Rev. Dr Gardner wanted to commend the WCC for taking another look and for testing the advice that they had received about the building plan.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that the building project would be discussed separately. He reflected that what was requested is what will be discussed, related to the loan and how we can proceed in a feasible way. He thinks they have found a good way forward, and does not see that this has been changed. He noted that the delays are not because of the WCC, but rather because of the Geneva authorities. The general secretary reminded that the appendix to his report is an accurate update about the development project, and that the steering committee would have more figures to discuss.

- *UNICEF partnership work*

Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká offered her thanks for the report of the general secretary. She asked if there was any further progress with the meeting with UNICEF. Rev. Dr Tveit shared that several documents and reports will come later in the meeting which will provide an update on the UNICEF project to protect children.

- *Latin America Meetings*

Rev. Cora Antonio Matamoros offered her thanks to the general secretary for his report. She observed that he had conducted many visits in a short period of time, and so offered thanks to God for this part of the report; this is what churches wanted. She observed that the 43rd Unity Synod of the worldwide Moravian Church gathered from 12-20 August 2016, and was hosted in Montego Bay, Jamaica. They were grateful for the presence of a WCC representative.

She then asked for clarification about the meeting in Colombia. She would like to know more about the relations there. Rev. Dr Tveit shared that there are several initiatives in Colombia and noted that some initiatives are coordinated by Mr Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, who is the WCC's representative to the United Nations and coordinator of the Ecumenical United Nations Office. He has been working on the peace process. The WCC was also asked by the Colombian government to monitor the peace implementation process, and we should respond to this.

The meeting to which he referred in his report is the annual gathering of the general secretaries of Christian world communions (CWCs); they decided to have their meeting in Colombia next year. The WCC general secretary will be participating because it is about the CWCs and also because it will be in Colombia.

- *Indigenous Peoples*

Rev. Cora Antonio Matamoros thanked the general secretary for mentioning the Aboriginal people in Australia in his report.

- *Asia Meetings*

Rev. Dr Hutabarat-Lebang noted that reporting on work in Asia is missing from the report. She knows that the report covers a period of four months, but she stated that there are regions of the world where Christians are in minority and who also need accompaniment. She also indicated that she would like to see a discussion about the Korean peninsula. She thinks that we need to look into this issue of Korean peninsula together with what is going on from Asian countries rather than separately.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that, for the WCC, Australia and New Zealand are in the Asia region, and he spent two weeks in Australia and New Zealand. He wrote about this in his report. He reminded the committee that we are also having this meeting of the executive committee in China as a way of further focusing on the Asian context. Rev. Dr Hutabarat-Lebang clarified that she wanted to talk about Southeast Asia. Rev. Dr Tveit noted that this was now understood.

- *Ecological Concerns*

Rev. Dr Hutabarat-Lebang noted the call for the churches to be involved in ecological concerns. She reflected that some churches in Asia will bring this concern to different meetings.

- *Gender Advisory Group*

Rev. Dr Hyunju Bae offered her thanks to the general secretary for his rich report. She would like to gently remind the general secretary about the gender advisory group report, which had many recommendations for the governing, advisory, and consultative bodies of the WCC. She quoted directly from the document, noting that: "the Gender Advisory Group requests that questions, feedback and report of action on the approved recommendations be reported annually to the executive committee by each of the bodies referred to and that a full report on the progress of these recommendations be provided to the executive committee by their meeting in November 2018". She therefore wanted to know whether the general secretary and associate general secretaries have created space and process to respond to this.

Rev. Dr Bae also spoke about the Code of Conduct. She noted that the report of the gender justice advisory group also speaks to Code of Conduct related to violence against women at WCC events.

Rev. Dr Tveit reflected that, exactly, in the Code of Conduct, they are ready to try to include this dimension as well as other dimensions in relation to the church and other contexts. He observed that he did not get any specific input from the Gender Advisory Group to include in this meeting. Still, he shared that they will also look at how to renew the gender justice focus, as well as discern ways of strengthening it in the upcoming years.

- *Rebuilding Haiti*

Rev. Dr Gardner reflected that when the general secretary talked about the gap between the rich and the poor and environmental challenges, his mind went back to Haiti. He wondered how as church we can continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti. Recently, a significant part of the country was devastated by a tropical storm, and several people were cut off from the earthquake in 2011. Since then many people are still living in tents, notwithstanding the millions of dollars given by the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). He reflected a concern that some of the money did not get to the people who needed it.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that with reference to Haiti, Dr John Nduna (general secretary of ACT Alliance) is better placed to say a few words about the commitment of the ecumenical fellowship. Dr Nduna shared that Haiti is one of those countries where there are problems because there are issues of bureaucracy. Shelter is a big issue. Many people are indeed still living in tents. With regard to ACT Alliance, they have continued to work in the various sectors, and these efforts are on-going. Members of ACT Alliance continue with their bilateral arrangements to be involved in these programmes. Haiti is very complex and coordination is a challenge.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima noted that the general secretary's report would go to the programme sub-committee for consideration.

4. Greetings and Exposure Visits

4.1 Welcome and Presentation by the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement

Dr Agnes Abuom moderated a hearing session.

On 17 November, the executive committee met with the leadership of the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) at their offices in Shanghai.

Dr Abuom welcomed the leadership of the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), who were serving as hosts of the executive committee meeting; she introduced the following:

- Rev. Dr Gao Feng, president of the China Christian Council (CCC)
- Elder Fu Xianwei, chairperson of National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSMP) of the Protestant Church in China
- Rev. Kan Baoping, general secretary of the China Christian Council (CCC)

Rev. Kan Baoping then introduced the following staff people from the CCC and the TSPM:

Overseas relations department

- Elder Ou Enlin, head
- Ms Shi Meiying
- Mr Fang Ye (Tony)
- Ms Zhou Wanying

Communications department

- Rev. Fang Ying
- Ms Qiu Yun

Professor, lecturer from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary

- Rev. Dr Wen Ge

Vice-chairman and secretary general of national TSPM

- Rev. Xu Xiaohong, vice-chairman and secretary general, TSPM/Head, Church Ministry Department

Social service department

- Mr Wang Baocheng (Paul), head
- Mr Liu Yiye (Leo)
- Ms Chen Yue

Vice-chair of the China Christian Council, and who has some responsibility for the media department

- Rev. Shan Weixiang

Associate secretary general for the TSPM and head of national research department

- Mr Gu Mengfei

Administrative office staff

- Mr Tang Hongwei

Media Department staff

- Mr Feng Chaochen (Franky)

Photographer

- Mr Wu Xinwang

Driver of CCC van

- Mr Ma Guorong

Dr Abuom noted that it is a great pleasure to meet the CCC/TSPM, and she offered thanks for their hospitality and the warm welcome that the executive committee has received. Members of the executive committee, staff, and advisors, all introduced themselves to the CCC leadership.

Dr Abuom thanked the CCC leadership for coming to the meeting and for inviting the committee to the region. She noted that this is the first time that the executive committee meets in China. She thanked them for the invitation and for extending hospitality to the executive committee meeting.

She noted that the executive committee meets twice in a year, and that one meeting is usually held outside Geneva in order to be with member churches and strengthen the fellowship; the other meeting is in Geneva to be with staff and to understand the goings on of the WCC. She reiterated how grateful the executive committee were to be here in China. This is a dynamic society, and the executive committee are keen to learn about what is going in this country and this region.

Following the welcome and thanks by Dr Abuom, the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) were invited to share with the executive committee.

Rev. Kan Baoping first showed a short video describing the life of churches in China. He noted that the film on DVD had been given to all executive committee members in their package.

Elder Fu Xianwei, Chairperson of National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) of the Protestant Church in China, then offered a presentation.

Elder Fu welcomed the moderator, vice-moderators and general secretary, along with the members of the executive committee and noted an old Chinese saying that all are brothers and sisters. The great Chinese thinker, Confucius, said how happy we are when we have friends come from afar.

Elder Fu shared that gathering here in Shanghai is a great chance for new friends and old friends to be together again. He also gave a sincere welcome on behalf of the TSPM and the CCC as well as the 38 million Chinese Christians on the occasion of this visit of the executive committee to their offices. He also expressed his warmest congratulations for the convening of the meeting.

Elder Fu commented that he heard that the committee came to Shanghai yesterday and today they will travel to Nanjing. He said that if a person would like to know about the modern China, it is important to see Shanghai. But if a person would like to know about the history of China, it is better to go to Nanjing. Shanghai is full of modern atmosphere; Nanjing is full of history. These two fully represent all of China: rich in civilization, but also modern and with a growing economy.

Through the opening up of the country and reformed policy, China can now connect with the whole world. The context of the church in China today is a transition moment between history and modernity, tradition and reality. In this setting, China is integrating with the whole world. Thanks be to God that the Chinese church, under the guidance of self-independence and self-management, can spread the gospel more proactively. The church has expanded its ministries in China. Ever since the late 1970s and late 1980s, the churches re-established activities, and the fast growth of Chinese churches is also of ecumenical significance.

Elder Fu shared that when meeting with the members of the WCC executive committee, he naturally reflected about 1948, the time of the first general assembly of the WCC in the Netherlands. At that time, four churches participated from China. There was a famous theologian from China, Dr T.C. Chao, who was elected as one of the six presidents of the WCC in 1948. But later, because of the special history reasons, the formal connection between Chinese churches and the WCC was discontinued.

He reminded the group the 7th assembly of the WCC in Canberra in 1991 when the China Christian Council officially joined the WCC again. At that time, the Chinese church returned to the big family of the ecumenical church. He shared that four years ago, China hosted the 2012 meeting of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) in Shanghai and Nanjing; this was first WCC meeting to be held in China.

Elder Fu shared that he believes that this executive committee meeting is an important historical moment for WCC. It will also strengthen the relationship between Chinese churches and the WCC. It represents the connection between the Chinese churches and the WCC, and the connection will be stronger, and the fellowship will be deepened.

The apostle Thomas is said to have come to China. Elder Fu noted that according to the written documents, the earliest introduction of Christianity to China was in the seventh century, more than 1300 years now. Protestantism was first introduced to Taiwan, China in the seventeenth century. Later, in the early nineteenth century, it was introduced to the mainland China. Therefore, it only has about 200 years of history on the mainland.

From the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, many western missionaries came from far away to China. They tried to spread the gospel in China, regardless of what they met. At the same time, they also contributed to the medical care the people and to cultural education, scientific technology, and others. Meanwhile, mission efforts to China were happening along with the colonial expansion of the western powers. Some missionaries even had a direct connection with the invasion of China, and the signing of the treaties.

Elder Fu observed that some missionaries were not willing to shift the responsibilities of managing and further establishing the church to the Chinese Christians. Because of this and the connections with colonialism, Chinese Christians resisted, and billed Christianity as a foreign religion, which made it very difficult for Chinese people to accept the gospel. Although China is the mission area where Western missions had spent the most human resources, money, and materials, up to 1949, there were only 700,000 Christians in China. With the deeper understanding of the gospel, the Chinese Christians started thinking about why Christianity in China was not growing. They realized that in order to eliminate the obstacles for the Chinese people to accept the gospel, they had to first eliminate the connections between Christianity and colonialism and imperialism. They needed to return Christianity back to the gospel and to Christ.

In order to build the body of Christ, they thought to build a Chinese church that is self-supporting, self-managing, and self-propagating ("three-self"). The vision of the Chinese Christians is that at the time of the new heaven and new earth, they can form their own teams to enter Jerusalem from the gates from the east, but not as one of the dots on the map of western missions.

In 1949, with the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Christian leaders tried to think about bringing Christianity to the people in a socialist context. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Chinese Christians launched the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), which aimed at advocating for a church managed by the Chinese people themselves. It has been over 60 years since then and the TSPM has brought deep revolutions to the Chinese church. At first, it helped the Chinese church to see self-management, and Chinese people no longer regarded Christianity as a foreign religion. This cleared a major obstacle for spreading the faith. TSPM follows Chinese cultural traditions of harmony and of respecting the differences in order to guide toward the adoption of union policies. They also encourage

Chinese Christians to think from their own contexts and cultural traditions. They hope to present the gospel that belongs to the Chinese people but also to make unique contributions to the spiritual traditions of the treasure chest of the rich ecumenical church.

Elder Fu observed that the experience and the testimony of the Chinese church revealed that the launch of the TSPM was a very important pre-condition for establishing the church in the territory of China. With the revival of the Chinese church, the CCC was established in 1980. Together with the national committee of the TSPM of the Protestant Churches in China, the two organizations are CCC and TSPM.

Although the CCC and TSPM are two organizations, they are like the left hand and the right hand and they work together in cooperation. They cooperate and co-assist each other to better manage the ministries for the Chinese Christians. In China, the CCC and TSPM convene a Chinese national Christian conference together and also to serve the congregations across the country together. In the international arena, the representatives from the CCC/TSPM have taken part in international exchanges on behalf of the Chinese churches. In this unique experience and realistic context, the Chinese church has developed three main characteristics:

- Denominationalism is gradually diminishing. They are establishing the structure for CCC and TSPM and entering a post-denominational era.
- The Chinese church has formed the evangelical means that are effective and that work in the Chinese context. They serve by benefiting people with needs using Christian ethics and also glorifying God at the same time.
- They work very hard to enable us to see a bright future for China that is dependent on a self-managed Chinese identity.

As for Christianity, Elder Fu noted that it is only rooted in the Chinese society and the cultural traditions through the contextualized thinking and practices. These can also enable the Chinese church to grow and mature. Currently, the Chinese church is dedicating itself and lifting itself by insisting on the basic faith traditions, by exploring the means and ways to explain our faith and spreading the gospel that fits the Chinese society context and traditions.

Chinese Christians love spreading the gospel. They also want to impact the religious freedom policy. In the last 30 years, Christianity in China has been growing very fast.

According to an incomplete survey, the approximate numbers for China are as follows:

- 38 million (Protestant) Christians
- 60,000 congregations
- 130,000 ministers, including pastors, associate pastors, and elders
- 47,000 full-time preachers
- 190,000 lay preachers
- 70 million copies of the Bible, which have been copied and distributed
- 4 million copies of the Bible published every year, in recent years
- 22 seminaries and Bible schools, and
- Current student enrolment in those seminaries of 3,600.

Elder Fu stated that in order to encourage, advocate, and assist grassroots congregations the CCC/TSPM established a social service department in 2013. So far, the social service ministries that have been

implemented include elderly care, development disaster relief, community development, environmental protection, capacity building, and more.

He shared that Amity Foundation, located in Nanjing, was first founded by the late Bishop K.H. Ting. It is a non-governmental organization. It is an independent organization and is not attached to the Chinese church. In the past 30 years, it has contributed greatly to ministries for social development in China. The social service department, by contrast, is one set up within the CCC and TSPM. He reflected that their goal is to guide and to organize Christians to participate in social service work. The CCC/TSPM has connections and co-operation with the Amity Foundation, but they are two different organizations.

Elder Fu said that the Chinese church is still a young church. It is facing many challenges and difficulties during its growth. The crop is plenty but workers are few. They still lack ministers and the rapid urbanization of China has brought imbalanced development in urban and rural areas. The change of the Christian demography has demanded more church management and pastoral care. Participation in social service ministry needs to be further expanded.

He reflected that we still need to further insist and develop the union worship service. In order to solve the issues, we not only need to be guided by God, but we also need to learn from the ecumenical church.

From the beginning the Chinese church has had a deep and rich historical connection with the WCC. In 1970s, the WCC was one of the earliest international organizations that insisted that the People's Republic of China should join the United Nations. Ever since the 1980s, the Chinese church has restored the relationship with the WCC gradually. Former WCC general secretaries Philip Potter, Emilio Castro, Konrad Raiser, and Samuel Kobia all visited the Chinese church. In 1987, the executive committee of the WCC passed a resolution that they would only admit the CCC as a representative of the Chinese church and supporting the endeavours of the Chinese church on seeking unity.

In 1991, the Chinese Christian Council (CCC) joined the WCC again, and China emphasized the one-China policy; this policy has been kept up to today. They appreciate and cherish very much the respect that the WCC has given to China and the managing of the church.

Elder Fu reflected that they still remember that in 2013 at the WCC assembly in Busan, the general secretary mentioned in his report that in the future, the WCC will further strengthen the relationship with the CCC and will have more cooperation as well. He shared that this is their prayer and hope.

Chinese Christians, as usual, will continue to pray for WCC ministries and for churches and brothers and sisters in the world. He shared that they also hope that the WCC will continue to pray for them and lift them up with prayers so that they can better spread the gospel in China, better manage the churches to bring more beautiful testimonies for our Lord.

In conclusion, Elder Fu extended his sincere and best wishes to the executive committee. He prays that during their time in China their spirit will be fulfilled, they will have good health, and they will have a successful meeting.

Rev. Kan Baoping then invited people to offer comments, questions of clarification.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Aykazian offered his thanks for the detailed history and report about churches in China. He asked about the number of 38 million Christians; is this only Protestant? He remembered that

six years ago when he was in Nanjing, they were told that the number of Christians was growing fast and that many churches were being built. He questioned if this is still happening, or if the process is slowing down.

Rev. Dr Gao Feng, President of the China Christian Council (CCC), clarified that the number of 38 million Christians refers to the Protestant Christians in China. There is a tradition in China that the Chinese Christians distinguish Protestantism from Catholicism. The Chinese think that they are two different religions.

He noted that Chinese churches continue to grow very fast and dramatically. However, there are also some changes. For example, in the 1980s and in the beginning of 1990s, the rural churches developed very fast. At that time, there was a rough statistic that every two days there would be three churches established. Since the late 1990s, however, the rural churches have gradually slowed down while the urban churches continued to grow. In general at the moment, urban churches are growing faster than rural churches.

Rev. Dr Gao Feng reflected that one of the reasons for the fast development of urban churches is urbanization. In the last 20-30 years, urbanization has developed quickly, and the rural population has migrated to the cities. This is the same for rural Christians moving to cities. Even some leaders of the rural churches have migrated to cities.

He shared that that group would have opportunities to visit urban churches: there are more young people worshipping in urban churches, especially young university students. In the past, when you visited churches, you would have found Christians who were older people and not particularly well educated. But now the structure of Chinese churches has changed. There are more young Christians. In the urban churches, there are about 27% young people or middle aged. In the urban churches, there are many people from different walks of life. This brings about challenges to the urban church ministries.

Dr Abba Haile Mariam Melese Ayenew (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church) offered his thanks for the presentation. He observed that China has experienced five major shifts in religions. He asked what the relationship is between Protestant Christians and other religions: are there things in common?

Mr Gu Mengfei, associate general secretary of the TSPM and director of the research department, noted that China has many religions. In Chinese history, he reflected, all of the religions have existed in harmony. They never had national conflicts or religious wars. They are continuing this way of living together well. He shared that there are five major religions and then within this there are also other religious beliefs. He noted that they want to build up the country better to serve the people better – so that all of the religions have a common understanding and common goals.

All of the communities work together and enjoy the fellowship. Mr Gu continued, and shared that in this structure, there are many people who join the organization to discuss politics. The religious people can come together to discuss many issues: protecting the environment, being peace makers, developing society, and doing charity work. In general, he shared, the relationship among religions is very good; and he gives credit for further respect and ability to work together well.

Bishop Simo Peura (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland) shared that he heard in the news recently that the policy of the Chinese government on religion has changed. He heard that one cannot have Christian crosses in church buildings in China anymore; he asked if that is actually the reality here. Rev.

Kan said to not believe that; there are still crosses in church buildings. The policy remains the same, i.e. that religions are protected by the constitution. Such rumours are not to be trusted.

Rev. Dr Gardner asked about the relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. He wondered what the CCC is doing to help bridge the gap and whether there a working relationship with the Catholic Church? What would be the total population of the Christian church in China be, including members of the Catholic Church?

He also asked about the Chinese people outside of China and the vast majority of Chinese labourers who are working in the Caribbean, Latin America and in other places in the world. He wonders about the witness of the church when he sees them in massive numbers in the diaspora. What is their connection to the church? Are they Christians? How can a church outside of their country become a space for them as well?

Rev. Kan shared that there is no official cooperation with the Catholic Church. He shared that he is not sure of the number of people in Catholic churches, maybe 7-8 million. Earlier, the CCC wanted to issue a joint faith statement with the Catholic Church, but realized that if they did that, then some church members might ex-communicate them. He noted that China is still in a phase where Christians are trying to convert each other. The time for official cooperation is not yet right.

Mr Gu shared that he could offer more information about the cooperation between Catholics and Protestants. The training of nurses and caregivers is an example. They also work with Muslims and other religions in social services. They do work with overseas church and faith-based organizations in the US and in other countries. At the moment, they do not have many resources to share at the international area, but hope that in the future they can do more.

With regards to Chinese working abroad, he reflected that this is a challenge because they want Chinese to be self-sufficient so Chinese people are not encouraged to start overseas churches. Overseas churches are the responsibility of people overseas, and not of Chinese people. But if Chinese people have a connection to their home churches, they might be supported by their home churches.

Dr Quawas wondered how much impact believers in China have on the political life of the country. How do Chinese Christians participate in political life? Are they excluded because they are believers?

Elder Fu shared that it was already mentioned that there are two political systems in the whole of China. One is the National People's Congress and the other is the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. There are Chinese Christians who participate in these two political organizations. There are people who make their point of view known. To be specific, if there are some Christianity-related issues that need to be discussed or moved forward, the CCC needs to discuss them in relation to these two political organizations.

He also asked whether there any Chinese faith-based organizations working in emergency aid or development. Although Chinese has a huge economy in which they, as church, can help international faith based organizations when there are crises; so far, he can only see cooperation between governments, and not between faith-based organizations.

He also observed that the 38 million Christians in China are more than all of the Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. He therefore offered an open invitation for them to visit the Middle East to facilitate cooperation in the future.

Elder Fu added that there is a long tradition that the five main religions should respect each other. Usually, one would not directly attack another's faith or comment negatively on other people's faith. The relationship between these different religions people is friendly. They usually respect each other's beliefs; for example, one cannot do Christian evangelism among Muslims. But, they are open to respond when Muslims become curious about Christianity. It is because in this tradition there are never any religious wars, so the five main religious can co-exist harmoniously.

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo added information about her own country. When the Chinese came to Congo, the local Congolese people ate and drank Chinese. But after that, the Congolese thought differently. They wanted contextualization. This was not only about putting traditions in context, but was also about change and collaboration. She believes that collaboration is possible. Congolese people are asking what will happen to their religion. Maybe they do not know that there are Christians in China. How does the Chinese church support the Chinese people overseas?

Rev. Kan shared that China does not send missionaries and does not have the idea of setting up foreign missions. Still ultimately, they want Chinese Christians overseas to be taken care of.

Bishop Swenson offered her thanks for the presentation. It has been helpful, and we are learning very much. She noted that the social service industries are very strong. She wondered what some of the emerging areas in social service industries are, and where they need to get attention. Is there any work on climate change?

Mr Wang Baocheng (Paul) noted that environmental protection is a priority. Still, this is a new area for the church. For example last year they worked with the Shanghai Christian Council on a workshop between pastors and other people working in the church on this issue. They also took on some action, such as cleaning up the river and picking up garbage. They want to have a series of workshops on how to protect the environment.

Rev. Kan shared that the executive committee was given the annual report from 2015 which also describes some more of the social services.

Rev. Dr Tita shared that basically we have been speaking about Protestant and Catholic churches. What about Orthodox churches and their presence in China? He also wondered, do the Protestant and Catholic Christians use the same translation of the Bible?

Rev. Kan shared that there is no reasonably-sized group of Orthodox Christians in China. Initially there were many more Russian and Armenian Orthodox Christians. But now, there are only a few Orthodox Christians who did business in Russia and who fell into the Christian faith of that part of the world. There are a few Chinese people who are studying in Orthodox seminaries in Moscow; perhaps when they return to China they could serve Orthodox churches here.

Responding to Rev. Dr Tita's second question, Rev. Kan shared that both the Catholic Church and the Protestant Christians each use their own translations of the Bible.

Dr Abuom offered her thanks for this presentation and discussion. She expressed appreciation for this very rich introduction to the life and work of the local churches in China She also thanked the CCC/TSPM once again for their hospitality. They rightly stated that they were part of the ecumenical movement from the very beginning. We are all pilgrims together, and our faith will be strengthened as we work and journey together. We should pray for one another. She also offered thanks to the CCC for giving the executive committee a member from the CCC (Rev. Kan Baoping).

The general secretary of the WCC, Rev. Dr Tveit, shared gifts of appreciation for the very warm hospitality. He re-affirmed that this is a time to strengthen the relationship with the church in China. This meeting with the church in China was a priority for the WCC.

Rev. Dr Tveit responded to two dimensions of what he heard. One, the CCC/TSPM shared an interesting and promising perspective with regards to young people attending church and involving themselves in the life of the church. He observed that not very many churches can say that there are 27% of young people attending churches. This is a sign of strength and vitality.

Two, he reflected on the diakonia ministry of the church as a witness. This is an expression of the gospel and of the Christian witness. This is our common mission. He shared that the upcoming days of this meeting will be rich ones, and gave thanks again for the presentation.

Dr Abuom and Rev. Dr Tveit offered gifts and thanks to Rev. Dr Gao Feng, President of the China Christian Council (CCC), and Elder Fu Xianwei, Chairperson of National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSMP) of the Protestant Church in China.

In conclusion, Rev. Dr Gao Feng shared what a great privilege and honour it is to host the first WCC executive committee meeting in China. He recalled that in 2012 the CCC hosted the first international meeting of the WCC – the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA).

He observed that he had a good discussion with Dr Matthew George, general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, about churches in the ecumenical movement. He hoped that the CCC can play a more active role in the ecumenical movement. They feel greatly encouraged at holding the first WCC executive committee meeting in China. He conveyed greetings and appreciation to the ecumenical family, and also presented some tokens of friendship to the leadership of the central committee: the general secretary, moderator, and two vice-moderators, as well as to the members of the committee.

4.2 JIANGSU CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

On 18 November, the executive committee was hosted for dinner at a local restaurant in Nanjing by the Jiangsu Christian Council. The group was greeted by Rev. Shi Li (David), the general secretary of the provincial TSPM/CCC. Introductions were offered of the following people:

- Mr Qiu Zhonghui, president of the Jiangsu Christian Council (JCC)
- Rev. Zhao Hui Juan, general secretary of the Jiangsu Christian Council (JCC)
- Ms Yu Xiho Hong, director of administration
- Ms Xie Ying, executive director of Geneva office of Amity Foundation
- Rev. Zhang Keyun, chairman of the Jiangsu Christian Council (apologies were received from him, as he was ill).

The president gave greetings, welcomed the group warmly, and shared that the executive committee is welcome to have meetings in Nanjing. He noted that the chairman also sends his greetings and welcome.

He offered some background about Jiangsu Province. He reflected that it is an important province in China, with a population of 90 million. The number of Christians in the province is greater than 2.4 million. There are 4,600 churches in province with 350 pastors. The church is growing by 5% per year in province; there has been continual growth for last 30 years.

Mr Qiu shared that Nanjing is special because has two seminaries: the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary which is national and the Jiangsu Seminary, which is provincial. He encouraged the group to visit the Jiangsu Seminary on their next visit.

He noted that Nanjing is a big city that hosts the Amity Foundation, as well as the Amity Bible Printing Company. This company is the largest Bible printing press in whole world and just celebrated its 30th anniversary. Between January and July of this year, they printed 150 million Bibles.

Mr Qiu also shared some information about the Jiangsu Christian Council. They concentrate on theological education, and annually they have a fundraiser for theological education. The council works closely with the Amity Foundation on social service projects, and they set up a charity fund in 2009 with Amity Foundation for diaconal work. This is not only done this province but others as well.

He reflected that it is raining more than usual this year. There is saying in China: “it is raining; hope our dear guests will stay longer”. He invited the executive committee to enjoy their dinner and to stay in Nanjing!

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson offered a response. She thanked them very much for their hospitality, and shared that it was such a joy to receive their welcome. She noted that it is a privilege to be here. She reflected that this is a historic occasion for WCC executive committee to be with you. The executive committee is very grateful.

She commended the CCC style of leadership, and observed that the growth of the church is impressive. Over the course of this meeting, they are looking forward to going to be with local churches, to seeing the Nanjing Massacre Memorial, to visiting the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, and to visiting the Amity Bible Printing Company.

Bishop Swenson reflected that she comes from an area that is prone to drought, and therefore is thankful for the rain. She also appreciated the new bonds of friendship that have been built this trip and she looks forward to a continuing and blessed partnership.

Grace was offered for the meal, and the executive committee ate a banquet-style dinner.

After the meal, Rev. Zhao Hui Juan, general secretary of the Jiangsu Christian Council (JCC), said that no matter how wonderful a banquet is, it has to come to an end. He looked forward to the banquets to come.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima offered thanks for a wonderful dinner. He observed that the dinner had been offered with lots of affection and love. He noted that even with the Chinese system of

eating – a rotating tray on the table with many different dishes – we tend to eat more than we do at home. The meal was excellent. It was a marvellous evening of fellowship, discussions, and sharing food.

Metropolitan Gennadios then offered Mr Qiu Zhonghui, president of the Jiangsu Christian Council (JCC) and Rev. Zhang Keyun, chairman of the Jiangsu Christian Council (in absentia) a small gift of appreciation.

God's blessings were extended, and everyone left.

4.3 NANJING UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

On 22 November, the executive committee visited the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NUTS). The executive committee was greeted and warmly welcomed. The committee was hosted for lunch; after the meal, the committee was given a tour with further background about the seminary they were visiting.

The executive committee was introduced to the following people:

- Rev. Dr Gao Feng, president
- Rev. Dr Chen Yilu, vice-president
- Rev. Chen Bin, vice-president

Rev. Gao and Rev. Chen offered some background information about the seminary. They shared that there are three levels of seminaries in China: national, regional, and local. There is one national seminary – the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NUTS) – as well as five regional and sixteen local seminaries. At NUTS, there are currently 374 full-time residential students from all different parts of China. There are eighteen teachers, and they currently have three kinds of programmes: undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral. The seminary also has five different departments.

It was noted that the Chinese church is growing, and the seminary will need to expand their enrolment soon. There are about 400,000–500,000 newly baptized people joining the church; they need trained pastors to lead churches. The school, and the church, need prayerful support.

Finally, some of the faculty members who were at lunch were introduced:

- Rev. Dr Lin Manhong (Melissa), associate general secretary, CCC/Academic Dean, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (WCC central committee member)
- Ms Tao Yurong, Staff, administrative office

Following the presentation, Bishop Swenson offered thanks and appreciation. She noted that we have been very impressed by the seminary and its work, as well as its commitment to educating leadership for the church. She presented the faculty of the seminary with gifts of appreciation.

It was also noted that the Rev. Dr Lin Manhong is currently a WCC central committee member, and she will soon be joining the executive committee of the WCC after Rev. Kan during the mid-term rotation of executive committee members. This news was received warmly.

4.4 NANJING MASSACRE MEMORIAL

On 20 November, the executive committee visited the Nanjing Massacre Memorial, and received a guided tour. The memorial exists in three parts: the outdoor exhibits, the remaining bones of those killed, and the museum for historical material.

The executive committee first explored the outdoor exhibits. The group learned that the Nanjing massacre took place over six weeks, from 12 December 1937 – January 1938. In total, there were 300,000 victims of the massacre. On 13 December each year, people gather in the assembly square at the memorial to commemorate the victims.

At the memorial, the WCC offered a wreath, and the executive committee members gathered in a circle around it. Rev. Dr Tveit shared that at this site, he is reminded of the many victims of war here, and in other places. He has deep respect for the victims. He reflected that today, on Christ the King Sunday, we offer the hope of resurrection.

Bishop Swenson offered a prayer.

After moving through the outdoor exhibits, the executive committee continued their tour inside the museum. The executive committee learned that the Nanjing Massacre was committed by the Japanese invaders to China who openly violated international treaties and the basic moral principles of humanity. During the six weeks from December 1937 to January 1938, Japanese troops committed a series of atrocities in Nanjing, including the cruel and brutal slaughter of innocent people as well as rape, looting, burning and the destruction of much of the city.

After the end of World War II, the International Military Tribunal for the Trial for the Far East and the Nanjing Military Tribunal for the Trial of War Criminals both set up special cases for investigation and trial. Among the latter, the Nanjing Military Tribunal for the Trial of War Criminals brought in their verdict that the Japanese soldiers committed 28 mass slaughters killing 190,000 people and 858 occasional slaughters killing more than 150,000 people. In doing so, they perpetrated an extraordinarily shocking tragedy and left a brutal and horrible page in the annals of human history.

In the museum, the executive committee observed the list on the wall of victims as well and saw portraits of the victims. They heard about the areas invaded by Japanese troops, and that the Japanese first occupied Shanghai before approaching Nanjing from three directions. The Japanese also took out other cities in the province. The air raids lasted many months. The Chinese put up a strong defence against the Japanese, however, there were many hospitals, schools, and other properties that were destroyed.

Nanjing was occupied by the Japanese on 13 December 1937, and then the massacre started. The Japanese soldiers had decided that “all captives should be executed”. At one point, one person died every twelve seconds; however, some Chinese people survived by hiding under dead bodies.

In 2007 when the museum was recently expanded, human remains were discovered on the site. There were nineteen bodies in total, including one woman. These bones were also viewed on the museum tour.

The executive committee learned that Chinese women were raped during the occupation, and 200,000 women were forced to be comfort women for Japanese soldiers.

Foreigners worked to establish a safety zone in Nanjing, and thus were able to save 200,000 Chinese refugees. Still the safety zone was not completely safe either: the Japanese soldiers also searched here and still killed people. The soldiers also tried to destroy bodies so that there was no evidence of what they had done.

On 15 August 1945, Japan proclaimed its unconditional surrender and signed the instrument of surrender to the Allied Powers on 2 September . On 9 September, the Surrender Ceremony of the Japanese Army to China was held in Nanjing. Japanese Lieutenant General Okamura Yasuji, commander-in-chief of the Japanese China Expeditionary Army representing the Japanese Army in China, signed the instrument of surrender to China and surrendered their arms. Just after this, the Surrender Ceremonies of the Japanese army in sixteen areas in China, such as East China, South China, North China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other places were held respectively.

In January 1946, some perpetrators were given immunity, while others were sentenced to death.

The executive committee was grateful for the tour and for learning about this aspect of China's history.

Dr Abuom offered thanks to those who organized the visit to the memorial. She shared that it was very moving, and that everyone was touched.

She reflected that for some on the executive committee, this will be their fourth visit to a massacre memorial: Kigali, Jerusalem, Armenia, and now here. She wondered, what does this mean for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace? She also referred to the current situation of Syria and the Middle East.

4.5 AMITY PRINTING PRESS

On 22 November, the executive committee visited the Amity Printing Press in Nanjing. They were warmly welcomed.

There were introductions of the following staff people:

- Mr. Qiu Zhonghui, general secretary and vice-chairperson, Amity Foundation; chairperson, Amity Printing Press
- Ms. She Hongyu, assistant general secretary, Amity Foundation; board member, Amity Printing Press
- Ms. Zheng Wei, secretary of the board, Amity Foundation

Mr Qiu was invited to address the group.

He offered a warm welcome to everyone to the Amity Foundation. He also hoped with the warm welcome, that we would forget the cold weather outside. He shared that he is pleased to see old friends and some new friends from all corners of the world and representing many different churches.

Mr Qiu noted that many people have had a long history of partnership with Chinese churches. He shared that the visit is significant for the following reasons: firstly, it is the first time for the WCC executive

committee to meet in Nanjing, China and to come to the Amity Foundation. He shared that they are very honoured.

Secondly, the executive committee has come at a time when they are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Amity Foundation and the Bible printing ministry. They could never have imagined 30 years ago that Amity would become the biggest Bible printing company in the world! This could not have happened without ecumenical partnerships.

Thirdly, thank you for receiving Amity's application to become an international ecumenical organization in working relationships with the WCC; this is so positive.

He reflected that this visit marked the culmination of a very long-lasting relationship. Since its establishment in 1985, throughout the years, the WCC has played an essential role in convening and gathering our ecumenical partners to support our work in China. Thirty-one years has been a long time, and it has been quite a journey. They could not have been able to overcome so many obstacles and to have achieved so much in the work without the accompaniment of the WCC. They have been given an immense support through the many roundtables convened by the WCC. He thanked the group for the wonderful friendship with the WCC.

When the founder started the Amity Foundation, he wanted to start new model of ecumenical partnership based on mutual respect, mutual sharing, and mutual accountability. They have learned and shared much in the roundtable meetings in terms of what it means to be part of the ecumenical family. Part of this means sharing resources in practice.

Today as they internationalize their work, they want to continue with this ecumenical model in their practice of sharing and witnessing God's love for all of creation. They are very much looking forward to deepening their relationship with the WCC and their ecumenical partners. He shared that he hopes that the executive committee will enjoy their visit with the Bible printing company.

Thanks were offered to Mr Qiu for his words.

The executive committee was then shown a short video, entitled "Fountain of Life", which introduced the work of the Amity Foundation. The video is 100% home-made: the script was written by Amity Foundation, directed by Amity staff, and all of the actors were Amity staff.

Ms She Hongyu noted that they have produced more than 150 million copies of the Bible. There were special commemorative Bibles. Each person was asked to sign the Bible, and to bless the Amity Foundation by signing it.

Ms Zheng Wei introduced the Amity Foundation. She reflected that the content of her presentation was going to focus on:

- China: Reform and Opening-up of More Than 30 Years
- Amity: A Special Philanthropic Zone for More Than 30 Years

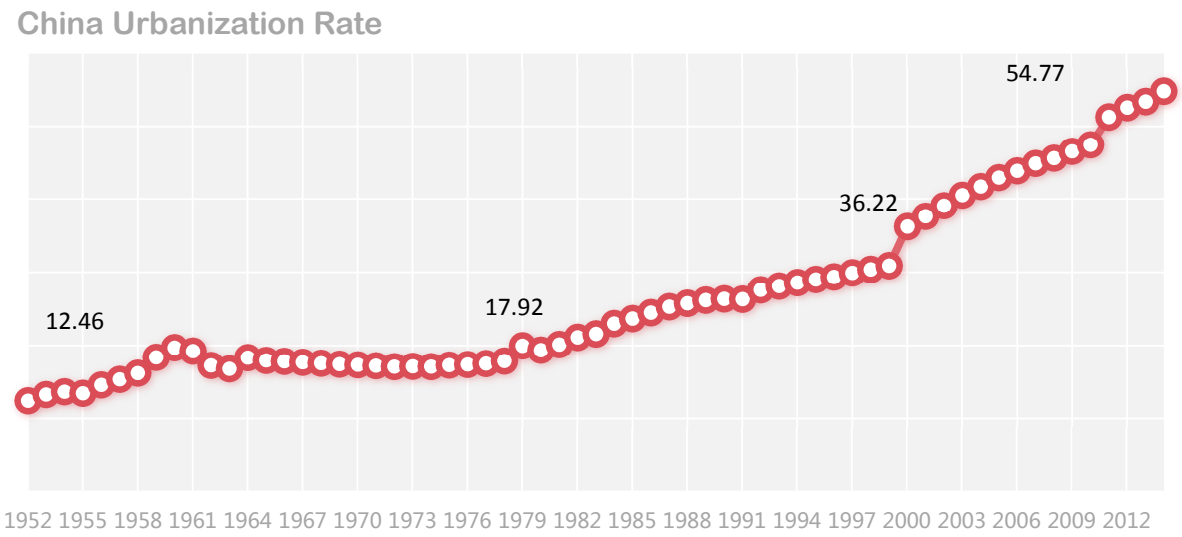
On 18 December 1978 the third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which was held in Beijing, decided to shift focus to the socialist modernization construction and reform and opening up to the outside, and to kick off reform in rural China.

Productivity began to increase. In November 1978, eighteen farmers of Xiaogang Village, in Fengyang County, Anhui Province, held a secret meeting and they decided to distribute the collective land to households. The annual grain production of the whole village in 1979 achieved 66 tonnes, which equalled to the total production from 1966 to 1970.

This reform and opening up had several results:

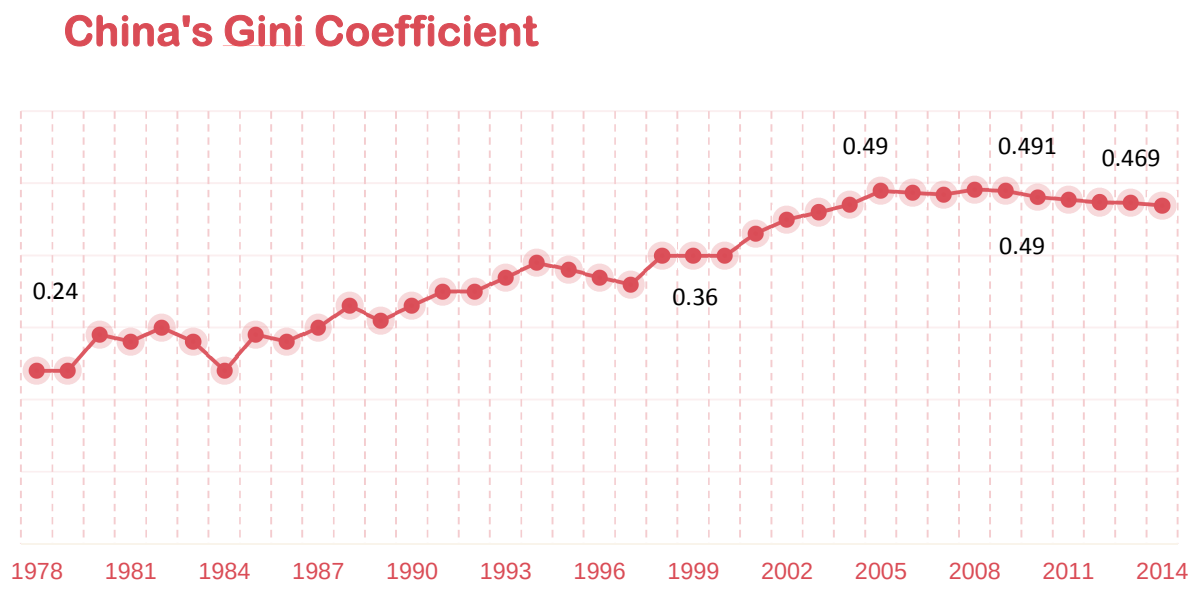
- The reform expanded from rural area to the whole economy
- China changed from a planned economy to a market economy, and
- Chinese economy and the GDP increased rapidly.

Over time, there was increasing urbanization, and people from rural areas began to flock to the cities. One result of this, she observed, is that there were large churches now in cities with people from many different dialects from across the country.



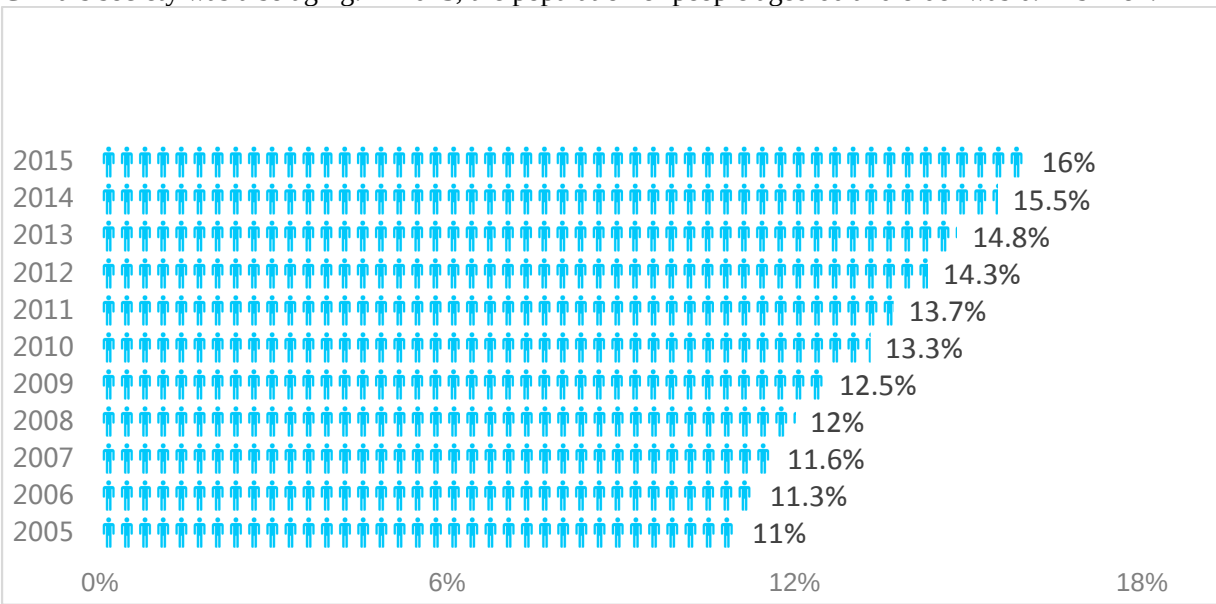
The reform and opening up also resulted in China's economy developing dramatically at the cost of unbalanced social development, and enlarging gaps between rich and poor, east and west, urban and rural, unbalance between economy and social development, ecological deterioration, and so on.

She commented that China's Gini Coefficient exceeds 0.40, a level that could endanger economic and social stability. China's Gini Coefficient was 0.462 in 2015.



China was also now facing increasing ecological deterioration, with drought, polluted water, water eutrophication, and desertification.

China's society was also aging: in 2015, the population of people aged 60 and older was 0.21 billion.



The third session of 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in November 2013 approved a decision on "major issues concerning comprehensively deepening reforms".

The purpose was to:

- accelerate reform and innovation in social sectors,
- innovate a system that can effectively prevent and solve social contradictions, and
- innovate the social governance system.

The third session of 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) raised the points of Social Governance. From Social Control to Social Management, and then to Social Management Innovation, and now further to Social Governance; the concept, subject, objective and method of governance will be changed fundamentally.

There was to be cooperation among the three sectors: decisive role of market, important role of government, and active participation of non-profit sector.

She observed that China's aspiration for reform will not be fulfilled without the involvement of Chinese non-governmental organizations (NGO's). Until the end of 2015, there were 326,000 social groups; 327,000 private non-enterprise entities, and 4719 foundations. This totalled more than 658,000 registered social organizations.

She then shifted to focus specifically on Amity, which has been a special philanthropic zone for more than 30 years. She stated that the Amity Foundation, an independent Chinese non-profit organization, was created in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians to promote education, social services, health, and rural development in China. It was the first faith-based non-governmental organization (NGO) in China.

In 2012, the State Administration for Religious Affairs issued a document to encourage the religious circle to perform charity activities.

The organization's mission is abiding by principles of mutual respect and interfaith harmony, Amity builds friendship with people at home and abroad. Through the promotion of holistic development and public welfare, Amity serves society, benefits the people, and contributes to world peace.

The goals of Amity are to:

- contribute to China's reform and opening up and social development,
- make Christian involvement and participation in meeting the needs of society more widely known to the Chinese people, and to
- serve as a channel for people to people contact and ecumenical sharing of resources.

Their culture has six C's: compassion, communication, commitment, cooperation, competence, and creativity.

Amity also has four roles, as follows:

- resource consolidator,
- service innovator,
- capacity builder, and
- policy advocator.

During its first ten years (1985-1994) Amity learned from western countries and raised funds from overseas partners to help the poor in China. In those years, they adopted a people-centred approach, targeted at the individuals, and meeting their basic needs. There was also the Amity Teachers Programme.

In the second decade of Amity's work (1995-2004) they decided to go west to serve the people in need. These years were development-oriented, utilized participatory methodologies, targeted the rural communities, engaged in Rural Integrated Development and Poverty Reduction Project, and worked towards sustainable development.

In the third ten years of Amity (from 2005 to now) Amity is trying to find an innovative way for future development. Amity is now engaged in both rural poverty reduction and urban community development, involved in both development projects and providing community service, diversifying the resources from both overseas and domestic channels, working on the NGO Development Center moving from self-development to helping grassroots NGO grow, and establishing a Social Service Center to respond to the needs of the urban disadvantaged.

She noted that rural community integrated development includes fostering orphans, disaster management, public health and AIDS prevention, social welfare, food security, schools and sponsorship, and environmental protection. Urban community services include the Amity Bakery, the Amity NGO Development Center, the Amity International Valley of Philanthropy, the Amity Development Center for Children, the Amity Home of Blessing, care services for the aged, and church and social service.

Church and social service involves the following:

- enhance the church's capacity in social service,
- promote mutual help and unity among churches,
- promote inter-religious dialogue,
- environmental and ecological concerns,
- Amity Social Service Network, and the
- Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund.

Amity seeks to be a bridge for the church to engage in social services. The phrase "not to be served but to serve" reflects the social responsibilities. She noted that Christians ought to reflect a consistent spirit of service. By cooperating with churches to perform church-run project activities, Amity helps them develop capacity in social service. Other activities include the church environmental protection movement, interfaith dialogue (training and capacity-building base), and international cooperation for the Bible printing ministry.

In 1985, Chinese Christian leaders of the day, Bishop K.H. Ting and the United Bible Societies (UBS) signed a memorandum of understanding that led to the establishment of the printing plant. UBS donated US$ 7.6 million worth of modern printing equipment and working capital for the set-up of the press. In 1987, the first Bible came off the production line.

Their new production site was completed in May 2008. It is 85,000 square meters, and the annual production capacity is over 20 million copies per year. From 1986 to November 2016, the Amity Bible Printing Press has produced 154,964,465 copies of the Bible for over 100 countries and regions of the world.

Corporate social responsibility and company culture:

- Satisfy spiritual needs (printing Bibles and books for China and overseas)
- Contributed to philanthropy work (funds and human capital)
- Encourage volunteerism (visit Amity projects and participate in fundraising programme)
- Invest in our people (care and training).

In terms of international cooperation, the European Network of Amity Partners (ENAP) was established in 1987, and the Amity Round Table Network was established in 2003. Amity is a member of ACT Alliance.

She noted that a WCC delegation visited Amity in November of 2006, and another WCC delegation visited Amity in 2012.

The celebration on the occasion of the completion of 100 millionth Bible was on 8 November 2016.

She noted that their international aid and development has included relief work for disaster victims in the Philippines, Madagascar biogas, work in Kenya, and emergency relief for the Nepal earthquake in April 2015. The Love without Borders work meant that there are 670,000 people who have donated online to support 1,087 patients from 17 countries.

Overseas offices were established. Hong Kong was the first overseas offices, established in 1986. Later, the Addis Abba office was established in July 2015 and the Geneva office was established in March 2016.

She summarized Amity's special role over the past 30 years as:

- a pioneering exploration of NGO development
- a channel for ecumenical sharing of resources
- a platform for learning and practice in social development
- a bridge for interaction between the church and the society
- a window for non-governmental exchange between China and the outside world.

Their vision is abundant lives, social justice, and a better world!

She concluded her presentation with a quote from Bishop K. H. Ting (from Love that Loves to the End):

> "Christianity moves and compels people, not by its doctrines, but by the love made manifest, love held high and spread abroad, love waiting eagerly for the final coming of a world of love. This love draws countless men and women who give their all to enlarge love's realm."

Following the presentation, the executive committee was invited to ask questions.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Aykazian thanked Amity for the impressive presentation and work. He heard in the presentation that there are centres in so-called Christian countries; are there centres in Muslim countries? He also wondered why there are no centres in the western world. He asked about interfaith relations.

Ms She Hongyu expressed thanks for the questions. Amity is having very ambitious plans already and is developing from a Chinese to an international organization. They are learning, exploring and understanding more about different cultures and the needs in different parts of the world. They first want

to take smaller steps and find their ways and learn and get experience and they will have good practices to duplicate. They have just established their offices in Addis Abba and in Geneva earlier this year. She hopes that their offices will be supported by friends all over the world.

She shared that interfaith dialogue started a long time ago in China. Now the function and role played in different communities is more emphasized, and people pay more attention to it. All see the important role in social services. Interfaith dialogue is mostly at the social service level. This does not mean there are no theoretical conversations. She just returned from a meeting in Shanghai where scholars were in the same room discussing common values of Christianity, Taoism, and other religions. They have started the debate and discussion.

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo offered thanks for the presentation. The Democratic Republic of Congo, her home country is 80% Christian. Younger people have Bibles on their cell phones and on their laptops. She is encouraged to hear the words that the Bible can make a difference and touch people. She wondered if people like to use the online Bible, and how would this affect Amity as a printing press. She also said that they would be welcome to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Ms Zheng Wei noted that in terms of an e-Bible, there was lots of worry initially because they are a printing press. But over the past five years, they have discovered that even if people have an electronic version, people still want to have printed Bibles.

Mr Qiu offered a response about the printing press. Initially they focused on print Bibles, but now they are also trying to respond to different demands from the readers, including different designs and more customized products. There are some more developed areas in US and other countries that have different designs for Bibles.

Rev. Cora Antonio Matamoros congratulated the people who are working in this place who are producing the word of God. She is happy as a woman and Indigenous person and an Afro-Caribbean person to have been able to come and experience their welcome. She noted that many Indigenous people do not have the Bible in their own language. She asked about translations into Indigenous peoples languages online.

Ms She shared about ethnic minorities and the Bible. So far, Amity Printing Company has printed eleven ethnic minority languages particularly for people in different provinces in China. Only a small number of ethnic minorities – they hope there will be more Bibles for ethnic minority speakers. As for other languages, they probably need some researchers from other Bible societies who could help in producing other ethnic minority Bibles.

Rev. Dr Gardner asked how the printing of Bibles is financed. Ms She noted that the company sustains itself. The company is a social enterprise and needs to survive according to the market economy. It also has values but the company runs on products and orders placed by customers. They want to provide the best quality at the most affordable prices. They also want to meet the needs of Chinese Christians and Christians overseas.

Mr Peter Prove (WCC Director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs) asked when the Amity Foundation first began to support humanitarian and development projects in other parts of the world, outside China. Ms She responded that the first international action was in 2009 when they were requested to share their technology, know-how and experience in Micronesia. Because of their success in China and in Micronesia, they were asked to work in other places in the world. In terms of disaster relief,

Amity Foundation has participated in crisis and relief work internationally. They have helped with tsunami and typhoons. They have helped with these financially and also in terms of personnel.

Dr Ayenew offered many thanks for the extensive presentation. He asked whether there are scholars to check the accuracy of the Bibles? Ms She shared that Amity Foundation is responsible only for the printing of the Bible. The copyright of the scriptures are provided by different Bible societies, so they should have the correct translation so that no mistakes are made. She shared that people are welcome to double check.

Dr Quawas recognized that they have a very strong infrastructure for printing. He asked if they are diversifying to printing anything else besides the Bible, such as student books, or even the Qur'an? If they are not printing the Bible, will they stop printing? Ms She shared that so far, they are only printing Bibles. The mission and vision was decided by the founders of Amity that this is a Christian value-based company. The products are mainly the Bible and Bible-related literature.

Dr Nduna asked about the relationship between Amity Foundation and the churches. He also asked, in terms of the service delivery, it gives the impression that Amity as a Christian organization that delivers all of the service itself. He therefore wanted to hear them speak more about partners. Without working with partnership, Amity might find itself stretching so that effectiveness might not be optimal.

Ms She shared that they have an official delegate, Rev. Kan Baoping. The relationship between CCC and Amity Foundation was fostered by Chinese church leaders. Amity is a Christian value-based organization but more than this it is church-based. Amity has many projects that cooperate with churches.

Mr Qiu added to that we are one family, both private and public. Amity has a very good relationship with the CCC and in terms of Bible printing mission. It is hard to improve their Bible printing ministry. He noted that their projects are very close and that they actively cooperate with different churches. They do lots of NGO induction as well as faith-based organization induction. Every year, they organize many different types of training programmes for churches. There is a great demand from local churches.

He noted that next month, they will organize a third workshop for the five main religions in the country. They will share their experience with other religions, and they want to contribute positively.

Rev. Kan made a correction that CCC and TSPM are not registered under the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA). They are registered under the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Dr Katalina Tahaafe-Williams (WCC Programme Executive for Mission and Evangelism) shared that she is inspired by the work. She wondered when will Amity come and set up an office in the Pacific region. Amity staff responded and shared that they were unsure of when that might happen.

After time of questions, Rev. Dr Tveit offered thanks and presented the Amity Foundation with gifts of appreciation. Dr Abuom offered a prayer.

The executive committee then received a tour of the factory workshop. They heard that Amity used to have to import paper, however, now 99% of their paper comes domestically, and they have very high quality Bible paper.

The executive committee was guided through the whole production floor, and were able to observe workers actively printing Bibles, as well as to see all aspects of the Bible production.

At the end of the tour, Mr Qiu presented each executive committee member with a bilingual Bible (Chinese/English), a photo of the executive committee with Amity staff that had been taken as the committee entered the building earlier that same day, Chinese loose tea leaves, and a token from the Amity Foundation. These gifts were received with sincere thanks.

The executive committee then moved to a different part of the Amity Foundation's site, and received a tour of the dormitories. Many of the factory workers stay on-site and work in shifts; they are provided with subsidized meals as well as a salary.

Finally, the executive committee went to a local restaurant, where they enjoyed a Chinese banquet. At the end of the meal, the executive committee was entertained by cultural presentations which included music and playing traditional Chinese instruments. Following this, the executive committee members were also invited to present songs, and some committee members accepted this, and offered songs of their own.

4.6 Greetings from the Secretary General of the United Nations

Mr António Guterres, the new general secretary of the United Nations, recently wrote a letter to the general secretary of the WCC. Rev. Dr Tveit reflected that this was not a letter to the general secretary alone; it was a letter to everyone. Rev. Dr Tveit read the letter, and it was appreciated by the executive committee.

5. Finances

5.1 First Presentation on Finances

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson, vice-moderator of the central committee, moderated a hearing session.

5.1.1 Financial Overview

Bishop Swenson invited Ms Elaine Dykes, WCC Director of Finance, to guide the executive committee through the financial overview.

Ms Dykes reminded everyone of the kind of budget that was approved for 2016. When the committee met this time the previous year, it considered the fact that in 2015 there was a very sudden drop in finances. They had been looking at 21 million for the overall budget, and 19 million as the estimated lowest point. At this time last year in November 2015, however, they were concerned that they had to revise plans for 2016 because of lower than expected revenue. In 2015 the results were much lower in terms of the revenue.

A few months later in April 2016, financial results closed with a surplus. As a result, there was a much higher opening position at the start of 2016 than when the budget was approved. The years 2015 and 2014

also presented surpluses. These surpluses have helped because they have to report overall income being forecasted to be down slightly.

Forecast 2016 compared to budget

- Opening balances CHF 1 million higher than budget, following (unbudgeted) surplus of CHF 0.7 million in 2015
- Total income forecast to decrease by CHF 0.6 million (2%) to CHF 24.9 million
- Total expenditure slightly increased compared to budget
- Programme funds forecast to decrease by CHF 0.3 million more than budget, but still forecast to close CHF 0.6 million above 2016 budget level
- Unrestricted funds forecast a slightly adverse result, drawing CHF 0.2 million on general reserves, instead of credit of CHF 0.1 million: Bossey guest house; staff costs; foreign exchange; untaken vacation provision
- General reserves forecast to close at CHF 6.9 million, after distribution to assembly fund, subject to approval by executive committee

Budget 2016 compared with forecast

CHF 000	**Unrestricted & Designated Fund**		**Restricted Fund**		**Total**	
	Budget 2016	*Forecast*	**Budget 2016**	*Forecast*	Budget2016	*Forecast*
Income						
Membership & UDI	4,041	*3,931*	-	-	4,041	*3,931*
Programme contributions	-	-	14,088	*13,625*	14,088	*13,625*
Investment and currency	15	*(70)*	344	*342*	359	*272*
Rentals, sales & misc income	6,590	6,637	372	*427*	6,961	*7,064*
Distribution of unrestricted income	(4,041)	*(3,789)*	4,041	*3,789*	-	-
Total Income	**6,605**	***6,709***	**18,845**	***18,183***	**25,449**	***24,892***
Expenditure						
Staff costs	4,343	*4,548*	8,154	*7,963*	12,497	*12,511*
Direct costs	6,010	*5,933*	7,969	*8,022*	13,979	*13,955*
Total costs before redistribution & tariffs	10,353	*10,481*	16,123	*15,985*	26,476	*26,466*
Transfers	(50)	(93)	-	142	(50)	49
Redistributed infrastructure costs	(2,790)	*(2,556)*	2,790	*2,556*	-	-
Internal sales Bossey	(550)	*(478)*	550	*478*		
Total costs after redistribution	**6,963**	***7,354***	**19,463**	***19,161***	**26,426**	***26,515***
Surplus / (deficit)	**(358)**	***(645)***	**(618)**	***(978)***	**(977)**	***(1,623)***
Opening balance	(2,149)	*(2,558)*	13,863	*15,310*	11,714	*12,752*
Closing balance	**(2,507)**	***(3,203)***	**13,245**	***14,332***	**10,737**	***11,129***

Results to September 2016 compared to forecast

- Overall result at 30 September is decrease in funds CHF 0.5 million (full year forecast: decrease CHF 1.6 million)
- Programme contributions are at 75% of year's forecast (30.9.15: 67%)
- Programme implementation costs (without central committee) at 63% of forecast (30.9.15: 57%)
- Central committee net cost forecast at CHF 624,000 (budget CHF 550,000)
- Bossey guest house sales in September 33% higher than same month prior year, but net results to date at deficit CHF 28,000 (30.9.15 surplus CHF 170,000); low internal sales
- Foreign currency losses higher than full year forecast at end September

Results September 2016 compared with forecast

CHF 000	**Unrestricted & Designated Fund**		**Restricted Fund**		**Total**	
	Sept 2016	*Forecast*	**Sept 2016**	*Forecast*	**Sept 2016**	*Forecast*
Income						
Membership & UDI	3,392	*3,931*	-	-	3,392	*3,931*
Programme contributions	-	-	9,759	*13,625*	9,759	*13,625*
Investment and currency	(102)	*(70)*	246	*342*	144	*272*
Rentals, sales & misc income	5,136	6,637	202	*427*	5,338	*7,064*
Distribution of unrestricted income	(2,842)	*(3,789)*	2,842	*3,789*	-	-
Total Income	**5,584**	***6,709***	**13,049**	***18,183***	**18,633**	***24,892***
Expenditure						
Staff costs	3,467	*4,548*	5,972	*7,963*	9,439	*12,511*
Direct costs	4,434	*5,933*	5,228	*8,022*	9,662	*13,955*
Total costs before redistribution & tariffs	7,901	*10,481*	11,200	*15,985*	19,101	*26,466*
Transfers	(93)	(93)	92	142	(1)	49
Redistributed infrastructure costs	(1,917)	*(2,556)*	1,917	*2,556*	-	-
Internal sales Bossey	(335)	*(478)*	335	*478*		
Total costs after redistribution	**5,556**	***7,354***	**13,544**	***19,161***	**19,100**	***26,515***
Surplus / (deficit)	**28**	***(645)***	**(495)**	***(978)***	**(467)**	***(1,623)***
Opening balance	(2,558)	*(2,558)*	15,310	*15,310*	12,752	*12,752*
Closing balance	**(2,530)**	***(3,203)***	**14,815**	***14,332***	**12,285**	***11,129***

Balance sheet, 30 September 2016

- Insurance value of WCC's buildings is CHF 106 million, while net book value is reflected at CHF 39 million; CHF 67 million value is undisclosed
- High level of liquidity; programme funds, designated funds and general reserves are backed by deposits and cash at bank
- Loans CHF 47.2 million (31.12.15: CHF 47.6 million)

Assets	CHF 000s	Related Obligation	CHF 000s	Net assets/ (obligations)
Land & buildings	39,011	Mortgage loans & long-term deferred income	49,902	(10,891)
Non-current asset investments	11,140	Endowment Funds	9,208	1,932
Current asset investments & cash	13,066	Programme Funds	4,155	8,911
Other current assets	1,182	Current liabilities	1,820	(638)
	-	Long-term provisions	393	(393)
Total (obligations)/assets available after deducting obligations				**(1,079)**

Covering reserves composed as follows:

Restricted fund for fixed assets	1,592	
Designated fund for fixed assets	11,517	(10,661)
Deficit fund to be covered by development project	(23,770)	
Designated fund for building project	1,823	
Designated programme fund	283	9,582
General reserve	7,476	**(1,079)**

5.1.2 DRAFT BUDGET 2017

Mr Mark Johnson, WCC Finance Manager, presented the main points of the draft budget for 2017. He noted that the budget is presented to the executive committee for approval.

- Overall income level increased by CHF 0.85 million compared to forecast 2016; includes CHF 0.6 million World Mission Conference 2018
- Programme contributions include CHF 0.93 million for UNICEF, UNAIDS and other special agreements, subject to their renewal in 2017

- Executive committee approval required:
  - to cover a programme deficit of CHF 87,000 from general reserves
  - to transfer CHF 250,000 from general reserves to programme funds for central committee 2018
- Bossey conference centre break-even result budgeted
- Infrastructure charge to programmes 14.5% programme income (forecast 2016: 14.2%; planning target: 15%)

Forecast 2016
Draft Budget 2017

In CHF millions	**Forecast 2016**	**Budget 2017** *draft*	**Programme Funds Forecast 2016**	**Programme Funds Budget 2017** *draft*
Funds & Reserves brought forward	**12.75**	**11.13**	**4.18**	**3.05**
Income				
Membership & unrestricted /(or allocation)	3.93	3.91	3.79	3.91
Programme contributions	13.63	14.45	13.57	14.39
Other Income	7.34	7.42	0.70	0.61
Total Income	**24.90**	**25.78**	**18.06**	**18.91**
Expenditure				
Programme costs	13.96	13.69	11.06	10.87
Staff costs	12.51	12.59	7.96	8.20
Total Expenditure	**26.47**	**26.28**	**19.02**	**19.07**
Transfers	0.05	-	(0.17)	0.10
Net Income / Expenditure after transfers	**(1.62)**	**(0.50)**	**(1.13)**	**(0.06)**
Income/(decr) Restricted Funds	(0.64)	0.02	(1.13)	(0.06)
Income/(decr) Unrestricted & Designated Funds	(0.98)	(0.52)	-	-
Funds & Reserves carried forward	**11.13**	**10.63**	**3.05**	**2.99**
Transfer general reserves for c com 2018				*0.25*
Staffing (FTE)	106.9	106.4	61.9	62.9

5.1.3 UPDATE ON INCOME DEVELOPMENT

Ms Dykes offered an update on income development.

- Foreign exchange rates continue to affect the value of contributions in Swiss francs adversely; the commitment of member churches and ecumenical partners to the work of the Council is more constant than the income trend in Swiss francs suggests
- At end October, membership contributions of CHF 3.45 million (89% of forecast) received from 174 member churches; follow up continues (2015: 193 member churches contributed)
- Agreement in 2016 with UNAIDS for funding from President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), for EHAIA and WCC-EAA, for their participation in project with several partners
- ICCO and CWM have re-initiated funding for 2017 based on new models of co-operation
- A strategy to raise CHF 0.9 million in 2017-18 for the World Mission Conference 2018 has been developed, and is being implemented

11th Assembly

- Forecast balance of assembly fund at 31.12.16 is CHF 0.89 million, if transfer of CHF 0.25 million from general reserves 2016 is approved
- Plan is to reach CHF 1.4 million balance at 31.12.18, compared with CHF 1.7 million at 31.12.10, three years before event
- A meeting of the Assembly Planning Committee is included in budget 2017

Bishop Swenson invited the executive committee to make comments and ask questions about the report.

Dr Quawas noted that the committee was asked to vote for 375,000 CHF for a programme that it had committed to at the last meeting in June in Norway. Is there a way of reporting on the programmes that were approved in Norway? It is difficult to figure out if it was already presented or if it is on another sheet.

He also asked about the deficit of 87,000 CHF. To transfer money from the general reserves, are we not entitled also to cover the risk of the delay of the real estate development project since the first agreement was to put an amount to pay the interest for the bank until 2020? The project will now be completed much later than that date. After 2020, we will have to secure the interest. He wondered if it would be feasible to study that issue now, in the finance sub-committee.

The general secretary had one comment about the added full time equivalent (FTE) staff position for 2017 that is proposed. He shared that it was his proposal to add one programme executive to the CCIA. There are fewer staff than three years ago. The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP) focuses on justice and peace, and there are many challenges in terms of how we work on disarmament issues related to peace. We want to be able to strengthen the staff capacity in this field. This is also part of the request to cover the deficit. But, he noted, this is a good prioritization at this point.

Rev. Dr Gardner asked what some of the challenges are with respect to PEPFAR.

Ms Dykes thanked the members for their questions. Concerning the fund for emerging needs, it was brought to the executive committee in June 2016 with a report on the plans for the use of this funding of how that was used this year. She reported that there is some expenditure planned for this year, and there is

still a balance left in the budget of about 65,000 CHF for 2017. If more information than that is required, it can be provided.

Regarding the 87,000 CHF deficit and the fact that there is 250,000 to be covered for central committee and other pressures, Ms Dykes explained that this is on the agenda of the finance sub-committee to consider how this is being covered and if we have the margins to do these things. There are particular documents for the finance sub-committee that look at the general reserves. These are also available for anyone who wants to see it.

Regarding PEPFAR, she shared that she would respond about fundraising administrative reporting. Regarding UNAIDS, there was good excitement to bring this work forward; they needed to agree on written conditions. An agreement is fixed by an organization such as this, and there is no elbow room to talk about the terms of reference for working together. The WCC is using to saying in broad terms what elements people might see in a programme (such as three workshops that would cost about 10,000 CHF). However, in this case with a funding partner, there is a different level of detail and control. One might have to name exactly how many would say how many workshops and how many people will be at each workshop. As such, they revised the budget about six times. The level of reporting will also be quite high. If there is overspending on any line it, will be under scrutiny and possibly be rejected. She noted that it is difficult to work with this kind of funding partner.

5.1.4 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a hearing session.

Dr Quawas thanked Ms Dykes and Mr Johnson for their work on finances. Dr Quawas presented the Audit Committee report.

This report covers the work of the audit committee since its last report to executive committee in June 2016. The committee met on 4 November 2016 to discuss the audit plan for the financial year 2016 with the auditors, and to review the current financial situation with staff.

I. Audit matters

As Swiss law requires that a partner of an audit firm may not be responsible for the same mandate for more than seven years PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) have transferred responsibility for the WCC audit to Marc Secretan, replacing Philippe Tzaud who has been the responsible partner since 2009.

a) Audit plan 2016

The auditor confirmed that the interim audit will take place in early December and the final audit in March 2017, in order that the Financial Report 2016 may be issued by the end of April 2017. Among the selected areas for review are human resources, receivables and the processes of closing the financial accounts. The audit fee is to be maintained at CHF 77,000, the same level as 2015.

The audit committee questioned an assertion in the audit plan in relation to fraud risks that executive committee is *Responsible for taking measures to avoid and identify illegal acts.* The auditor gave the view that, under Swiss law, the role of the executive committee is to ensure that there exists a management structure, an internal control system, as well as policies and procedures, which aim to ensure that illegal acts are avoided and identified.

b) Special project audits

Twelve project financial audits are to be mandated for 2016 (in 2015: 11 project financial audits). The committee received a report setting out the profile of the mandates for 2016.

II. Points arising from review of current financial situation

(i) Building project and depreciation

A proposed change to the depreciation policy was discussed. From 2016, the net book value of the cost of office renovations at 31 December 2015 will be written off over the three year period to 31 December 2018. The cost of office renovations carried out in 2016 and following years will be charged to expenditure in the year it is incurred. A further assessment of changes required to the depreciation policy in the light of the building project will be made in 2017.

(ii) Offices outside Switzerland

The audit committee noted that issues concerning compliance with social security laws in relation to EHAIA local staff that had been reported at its meeting in November 2015 had not been resolved. In 2016, one of the five offices in Africa has been brought into good standing. The committee heard that proposals that would bring the other four offices into good standing are under consideration. The audit committee requires to be kept informed of this matter until it has been fully resolved.

At its last meeting, April 2016, the audit committee discussed the management assessment of the EAPPI project that had been mandated by the general secretary and requested that it be shared with the auditors prior to approval of the WCC financial statements for issue. The committee was aware that a consultant had been mandated to conduct a full evaluation of the EAPPI project in 2016 and asked for a progress report. Staff informed the committee that the consultants had completed their work and that their report will be on the agenda of the executive committee in November.

The audit committee questioned why the Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre ("JIC") is not listed as a WCC office outside Switzerland, subject to the policy, in the draft document reviewed. Staff concurred that the JIC should be added to the list of offices subject to the policy.

However, the JIC is considered to be a *joint project of the Jerusalem churches, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC).* It is therefore not listed in the Financial Report, under accounting policy defining the basis for consolidation, as being under the control of the WCC. Its income and expenditure is included in the WCC financial statements, within the project accounts.

III. Other matters

a) Fraud risks and controls

The committee received the annual review of fraud risk prepared by the staff as required by its terms of reference. The staff confirmed that there were no instances of fraud or suspected fraud to be reported.

b) Membership of the audit committee

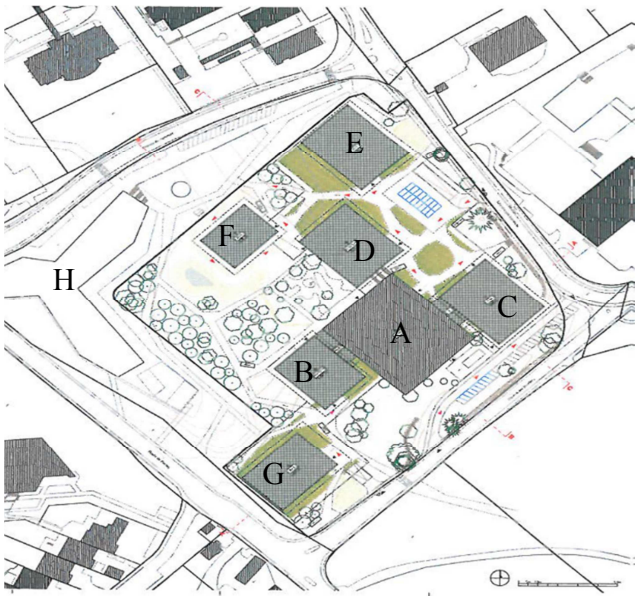
The moderator of the audit committee expressed his intention of relinquishing his role after the next meeting of the audit committee in April 2017. Staff reported that one WCC member church, contacted during the central committee meeting in Trondheim, would consider a request to have one of its experienced financial managers appointed to the audit committee as a professional member.

The executive committee received the report of the audit committee.

5.1.5 UPDATE ON REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Ms Dykes offered an update on the real estate development project.

Steering committee for the real estate development project



		m2
A	Offices and chapel	4,245
B	Ecumenical Centre offices and rental ?	7,935
C	Ecumenical Centre offices and rental ?	12,640
D	Offices & commercial area	9,040
E	Offices	13,990
F	Apartments	6,010
G	Hotel residence	7,840
		61,700
	Car park spaces	582
H	Global Fund headquarters	25,500

- Recommend first steps in sales strategy
- Recommend approach to risk strategy

Ms Dykes noted that the Ecumenical Centre is considered to be a heritage site, so it cannot be torn down. Instead, the building will need to be re-developed and renovated. Unfortunately, the cost of renovations is as much as 24 million CHF, which is more than it would be to build new. She noted that one of the challenges with the current building is that it is quite large, and the space inside the building is quite specialized, and so it will not be easy to rent out space to other people. For example, the Chapel and the meeting room space are specific and unique to the WCC.

Green Village timeline

Completion dates, estimated and actual					
		Actual	Development contract signed 30.5.12	Reported at central committee Jun-16	Revised Nov-16
Phase	**Description**				
0	Preparatory: assessment of buildings	31.12.12	30.9.12		
1	Architects' competition	31.10.13	30.6.13		
	Delivery of ADP to Canton	30.11.14	30.9.13		
2	Canton & Conseil d'Etat adopt ADP		30.9.14	31.12.16	31.12.17
	iterative phases				
3	Building permit adopted		30.9.15	31.12.17	31.12.18
4	Financial objective for sale defined		31.12.15	30.11.17	31.1.19
5	Commercialisation; investor designated		31.3.16	31.12.17	30.6.19
6	Delivery of building		31.3.18	31.12.19	31.3.22

- Area development plan (ADP) delayed
- CHF 24 million loan: fund covers interest to December 2020, at current rate
- Iterative phases: outline timelines for building E
- Completion last building, C, in 2026

Ms Dykes explained that they are working on also reducing the number of cars coming to the building. There are currently 296 car park spaces. The Global Fund reduced their car park spaces by 15%. The WCC also wants to reduce the number of people who are driving individual cars to the building and will have fewer car park spaces available per person in the future. They need to take the wisdom of their partners and experiences to allow this to move into a move formal process. The car park spaces represent a value for those who will move to invest in the site.

She noted that the delay is for both the loan and covering the cost of the loan. She shared that the loan will reach its maturity in 2017. The loan included no reimbursements. This is crucial. Talking with the bank before this meeting, the bank said that they understand the situation and they will probably allow for no reimbursements. They were granted a loan of 30 million and they have only withdrawn 24 million.

If there are no reimbursements, Ms Dykes noted, it will be difficult to repay with the current financial situation and the other demands on general reserves. She will be glad to report that they can renegotiate the loan. They will meet with the bank in January 2017. It will be very important that the proper outcome of that meeting would be to have three more years without a reimbursement. The rate they have is 1.3% which is an enjoyable bank rate.

She shared that during the building phase, the Ecumenical Centre will continue to be fully operational. This is because the building E will be constructed first. The timeline goes until 2026.

Real estate consultants and studies since June 2016

- **PlanConsult**: tested Implenia's financial estimates and parameters; conducted a net present cash flow study; identified two preferred alternative strategies; prepared assessment of risks and opportunities

- **Implenia**: shared project timeline; recommended five alternative sales and ownership strategies; highlighted need to assess risks
- **Mr Philippe Favarger** (real estate consultant): commented on reports above; considered approaches for investment by member churches; recommended strategy for existing residential building
- **PricewaterhouseCoopers:** assessed VAT risks
- **Other studies:** updated indicative requirements for own office space; started legal audit of current rental contracts

Consultants' views

- Confirmed that project will meet WCC's objectives to:
  - reimburse loan of CHF 24 million
  - renovate Ecumenical Centre, and own sufficient office space
  - generate rental income with target CHF 3 million
- Favour land leasehold, rather than land sale
- Retain flexibility: decide on extent of building ownership later, after financial results of initial phases
- Test alternative strategies for susceptibility to risk
- Determine WCC's own approach to risk strategy

Opportunities and risks for consideration

- Owning buildings A, B and C could generate annual net rental income of CHF 5 million to CHF 8 million; however, loans of up to CHF 77 million would be required (*PlanConsult report*)
- Estimates of vacant office space in Geneva range from 180,000m^2 to 400,000m^2, possibly as much as 9% of available offices: financial models should be tested for office vacancy rates (*Mr P. Favarger report*)
- The development margin (of CHF 42-47 million) may vary, and represents some risk; an alternative "goodwill", fairly close to the development margin, could be negotiated, with reduced risk (*Implenia report*)
- Renovation of building A may be under estimated at CHF 24 million (*PlanConsult report*); or may be correct, given "empty" volumes (*Mr Favarger report*)

Rev. Martina Kopecká offered a prayer as the session closed.

5.2 Discussion on the Financial Report

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a hearing session. The executive committee was invited to make comments or ask questions about the financial report and update about real estate.

Dr Ayenew offered his thanks for the financial presentation. He asked if the new building will have a symbolic expression as a visible sign of Christianity.

Dr Abuom offered thanks for the long and detailed report. She noted that Ms Dykes in her presentation had mentioned about member churches investing in the project, and that it might bring up some complications. Dr Abuom asked what those complications might be.

Rev. Cora Antonio Matamoros offered thanks for the report. She feels that church members should feel that the construction is their construction. It is a representation of faith in the worldwide context. Church members could have one harvest collection in the year, and it could put those funds towards the construction. Then, the WCC could say that a percentage came from the different member churches because of the harvest. Member churches need to know that it is their building.

Rev. Dr Watkins also wanted to express appreciation for this amazing report. She wanted to ask if Ms Dykes could give a brief summary statement of where she understands us to be with this real estate development project. She needed a summary with less information, not more.

Dr Quawas noted that this project is being rescheduled for the third time: it was first 13 September 2014, then 1 November 2015, then 13 December 2015, and now the revised is 17 December 2016. The revised timing was from 2016 to 2017 to 2018. He asked about the planning of the project. He wanted to raise a red flag, remarking that the cost of building when it was planned in 2012 would have been much less than what will be spent if it is started in 2018 and if the last building is be finished in 2026. His concern is that the project is not clear, and the steering committee needs to work harder. He thinks that this is a dangerous direction now in terms of investment.

Mrs Nelyubova shared that if we look at the map, the newly built building needs to be higher. She had a question about the height and whether the building A would have enough light. She recalled a discussion years ago about the plenary hall and building a glass roof, which was a requirement of the experts of an ecological must. Buildings C and D will be so close to A; will we not face the same problems of the light? She wondered if any thought given to that.

Ms Dykes was invited to respond to the various questions.

Ms Dykes first spoke about Christian symbols on the site. She noted that the guidance that was given in the arch specifications in 2013 included the requirements that the cross that is currently outside the existing chapel must remain. Any other sign posts will be of similar style. The heritage department protects the site with its original design, which means that the cross will remain as it is there. It is not the case that elsewhere on the site there will be many other Christian signs. They will be able to keep some of the special symbols from the garden and to move them to the land that will belong to the WCC.

Ms Dykes then commented on investing into the building by member churches. She noted that this leans to distinguishing two different ways that member churches could contribute to the project. One way will be to support the WCC itself by lending funds to the WCC – which would be remunerated – in order to bring up the proportion of what is owned on the site by the WCC. A second way is for a member church to invest directly, so that it would own something on the site. The second type of investment is complicated because there are laws about investment by foreign people in Switzerland. The only provision is around social housing. If the building was on social housing it could be owned by a group of member churches. But, at the same time, entirely social housing is not the best for the WCC if the WCC wishes to have the best financial outcome on the site. Still, this can be looked into further.

Ms Dykes explained that from the leadership team that met with the consultants, there was not enough information about how member churches could invest through a real estate investment fund. They could look at how third parties could invest in the property. A third way is that at some stage it is actually a Swiss real estate company which buys some of the property or leases some of the land on site. Member churches could then potentially acquire shares in an existing real estate fund. It is generally understood

that Swiss real estate funds are good places to invest money and there is little of this type of investment available. More work would need to be done to understand fully how this could be done and it will need to be carried forward as the project continues to see about member churches investment possibilities.

Ms Dykes then referenced member churches to see the project development, and commented that Bossey pre-dates the Green Village project in every way. The last round of investment in Bossey was 2010-2011 and this was the development of the conference centre. Renovating the Chapel was in 2016. The decision to renew and invest and develop the ecumenical campus is a 2012 decision, and it followed the decision to close the pension fund and deal with the losses from the pension fund.

Ms Dykes noted that the question of land lease hold is an emerging one. It becomes clearer that leasing land will bring certain opportunities to avoid selling the land, but also to not have to invest in buildings. In the future if buildings are sold, then those buildings will not have anything to do with the WCC and they will be owned by other organizations entirely. They will not have any hallmark that relates them to the WCC. It is important for the site itself that the project is coherent and bears the style of the Green Village. She noted that the WCC is the landmark owner. The WCC will want the project to look at high sustainability, ecological view, a consistent appearance, etc., and will also work with the architects in the next year to see what the Area Development Plan (ADP) and the master plan for the appearance of the site. An ADP could end up with buildings of different colours and different styles.

Ms Dykes then offered a brief summary statement in her own words: we have a project that is aiming to close a 24 million CHF loan. As a first priority for the organization, we must make transactions according to the agreement signed in 2012 that will clear that debt. We need to wait for a plan approved by the authorities to make that transaction. They believe that can be achieved in 2019, and are prepared to wait a year longer if they must. Everything else that happens on the site will be an improvement on the WCC financial side. After the loan is dealt with, the WCC will own just as much space and be in a better income profile.

Ms Dykes responded to the question about whether the project may not be well planned, and stated that the timeline did not expose the last timeline from the central committee meeting. She could have also shown the profile from July 2014. She noted that it is part of the documents and is available if anyone wants to see it.

She stated that it is more important to look at where we are now. Even with our partner being a leading construction firm in Switzerland, they looked at them and asked when it will be possible. They asked if they think it will be held up until July. They said that it is better to say one year. It is hard to predict how long it will take. There are very few projects like this in all of Switzerland and very few in Geneva specifically. The state is supporting the project. It is a democratic process and if someone raises an objection or opposition, then it must be dealt with. She noted that good staff have been brought to the project. Everyone is interested in the project, and everyone wants to move forward. She was surprised at how many departments need to review a project: so far has she has counted fourteen different departments. She noted that there is risk, but believes that there is a way to solve this. If it is done in the best way the loans at Bossey can also be covered.

Ms Dykes offered a response to the question about adequate light. She noted that when the architect's specifications were prepared in 2012-2013, part of the process was to ask the users in the Ecumenical Centre about their users in the future. There was already a question of lighting the lobby of the Ecumenical Centre and in the main part of the building. They have already discussed this with their

partner and with the heritage department. The heritage department wants it kept as close to the original plan as possible. Building D was to be aligned in a new position to maximize light coming in from the garden. Even inside building A, there could be steps from the cafeteria to the main hall. It would be a wonderful way to bring more light into the main hall.

The general secretary shared that he is glad that we have this moment to digest the information from this project. One of our big tasks is to examine this project and to make decisions. He added a few additional things:

- The WCC has an enormous asset, but also has some historical risks related to a pension fund that we have tried to find a way to solve. Without addressing this, we would have been in a very risky situation which would have impacted the whole Council.
- Owning so many buildings built 50 years ago increases the need for investments in renewed restoration for the next 50 years. We know that this will cost much more than the loan that was taken for the pension fund. Holding an estimate of renovating building A, the total mass of the buildings is much more.
- There is a real risk related to doing nothing. The potential for this project has increased immensely; still, they received an agreement by the state. It could be increased to the same as the global fund building. The income potential increased more than three times. The process has already brought us a great deal. The global fund project in building H has a five-year delay and this was with the state as owner of the land. This is how these projects work in Geneva and all of Switzerland. But there is political support.
- The contract that was made in 2012 has many strong dimensions. It defines a common outcome of this project. They are not only leasing land, but also partners in a big development project. It is important to stick to this so that the outcome is shared. In this, it is important to know that a partner will not go into this project without the intention of fulfilling it. We are not taking more risk than any other partner in this project because we are sharing the risk.
- The Green Village idea gives us more flexibility that we can start the project with three parts (E, F, G), and solve the most urgent financial challenge related to the loan. Already by this, we can start getting funds into the necessary fund in order to build our own building. By doing this one thing, we will solve one big problem and also put money towards our own building. It will resolve the challenge of how to deal with the pension fund, and also the challenge of what we do with an old building. We will move on with faith and with a good prognosis. There are more options available to us.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima asked who the project belongs to. Is it the staff, the steering committee, or the churches? Are churches aware of the whole project? He observed that the churches made the decision through the governing bodies.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that the WCC as a fellowship made this decision. He shared that the question is very relevant. This is one of the most frequent questions that he gets when he visits with member churches. There is a great interest and great support from the churches that we should do the best we can for the future of the council. To his knowledge, there is good awareness in many of the churches.

Dr Quawas asked whether the executive committee know the terms of the contract that was signed with the development company. He wants to know if the terms of the contract were shared with the executive committee. Since there is a risk, the executive committee should know. This is important for the future of the WCC. We cannot just leave this to the steering committee. The executive committee must be

involved. We need to request from the management to pay attention to the terms of the contract of this development project because it is important for the future of the WCC.

Rev. Dr Tveit clarified that the contract was signed with the executive committee before the last assembly, so even though the members have changed, the executive committee did its work. The contract could be made available if a member of the executive committee would like to see it. We should keep in mind that this is a confidential document. It cannot be simply distributed and circulated widely. Dr Abuom noted that it might be helpful to see the contract again. Since the executive committee took a decision there have been changes and new members coming onto the executive committee. It would be good to look at the contract again now so that we are all reading from the same page.

Metropolitan Gennadios asked if we could have a recommendation to look at this at the next executive committee.

Dr Quawas wondered what kind of measures would need to be taken if there are problems with the loan in the future. A strategy is needed in any case because the loan will end at the end of 2017.

Ms Dykes stated that if it was a serious issue with delays and the loan, then the next thing that would happen is that we could be loaned money. They will come forward with a proposal that will allow the WCC to continue with the project. She reminded the executive committee that the WCC has general reserves. We need to be able to continue for a few years without reimbursing the loan.

Mr Lemopoulos reminded the group that the steering committee is not a decision-making body. The steering committee makes recommendations to the executive committee and the executive committee makes decisions.

Dr Quawas asked the last time that the executive committee made decisions about this. Mr Lemopoulos responded that decisions about the contract were taken in 2012. There were no issues that needed to be decided on since this current configuration of executive has met. Dr Quawas offered a hope that in the future, the steering committee would be the ones to bring reports to the executive committee, and not the staff of the finance department.

Rev. Robina Winbush (Presbyterian Church USA) asked about the composition of the steering committee are and if there are both central committee and executive committee members.

Ms Dykes listed the members of the steering committee:

- Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson, United Methodist Church
- Rev. Dr Paul Gardner, Moravian Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (asked to participate in Nanjing, name to be confirmed at the 2018 central committee meeting)
- Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary, World Council of Churches
- H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
- Bishop Eva Brunne, Church of Sweden
- Rev. Laurent Schlumberger, United Protestant Church of France
- H.E. Metropolitan Dr Vasilios of Constantia – Ammochostos, Church of Cyprus
- Archbishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko, Methodist Church Nigeria.

Rev. Dr Hutabarat-Lebang asked if information was sent to member churches about this. Rev. Dr Tveit shared that information has been sent to member churches many times. Rev. Dr Hutabarat-Lebang proposed that the summary that was sent earlier could possibly be resent. Rev. Dr Tveit clarified that a more extensive presentation of this has been made to all member churches.

Dr Abuom proposed that since there are two members of the executive committee on the steering committee it would be helpful if one of those two could take the responsibility to report on the progress of this steering committee to the executive committee. This can help clear the air, and also separate it from instead of being a staff responsibility to becoming a responsibility of one of the members of the steering committee.

Archbishop Dr Aykazian said that this executive committee has given the responsibility to the steering committee to come with recommendations. The steering committee or the general secretary can present this information to the executive committee when there is something new. The entire project is getting delayed but this has nothing to do with the steering committee. Geneva is not like any other city. In every central committee, it is discussed. He does not see that there is something extremely new, but it is the right of the executive committee to be informed.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that it is important to have this discussion. We need to know the history and perspectives on it. He noted that in the beginning phase, a steering committee was appointed by the former executive committee. The steering committee was supported by experts in real estate and lawyers to develop and sign a contract. Then, there was a phase of working on the architectural plan. Most of the time the Area Development Plan (ADP) has been with the Geneva authorities. Each time the executive committee meets, he brings a progress report on this building project. He reflected that we, as an executive committee, have the responsibility to follow up on administrative issues. It is important because now there are more issues on the table both about what we know and understand, and what is to come.

Ms Dykes reminded that the executive committee had asked the steering committee to bring a report to the finance committee so that a fuller report can be given to the central committee. She stated that there was a report brought to the central committee in June 2016. Further, every six months there is a written report that lists the various meetings and legal acts that have taken place. This report can be made available to anyone who wants to review it historically over the years.

Metropolitan Gennadios confirmed that there will be a report to the next executive committee meeting. The general secretary clarified that they can bring the contract to the next executive committee meeting. Ms Dykes noted that she would feel uncomfortable presenting the contract to a large group meeting with so many staff present. They have signed confidentiality clauses around the contract, and so would need to make it available with this in mind. Rev. Dr Tveit observed that the contract is still available at any time to the executive committee members.

The decisions taken during this discussion time were affirmed.

5.3 ACTION ON THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr Abuom moderated a decision session.

She invited Rev. Dr Paul Gardner to present the report.

5.3.1 CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION

The finance sub-committee discussed the results to 30 September 2016, the financial forecast 2016 (Doc. No. 02), and the *Report on progress with the WCC financial strategy 2014-2017* (Doc. No. 05).

The finance sub-committee noted that total income is forecast to reach CHF 24.9 million in 2016, close to the budget of CHF 25.4 million (2015: CHF 25.6 million). The total decrease in funds is forecast at CHF 1.6 million, being CHF 0.6 million more than budgeted. It was reported that unrestricted funds were forecast to suffer a small deficit of CHF 0.2 million, compared with an increase of CHF 0.1 million budgeted. The forecast deficit is the result of reduced internal income at the Bossey guest house and conference centre compared with 2015; unrealised foreign exchange losses; and unbudgeted staff costs, for a few cases where the notice period was waived on termination of employment contract.

The finance sub-committee recalled that the budget 2016 did not include an allocation of income to the assembly fund. However, it had been planned to authorise a transfer of funds from the general reserves. It was confirmed that, taking account of the forecast results, it was expected that the general reserves would close at CHF 6.9 million, slightly above the target of CHF 6.3 million.

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee:

(i) require that a transfer of CHF 250,000 be made from the general reserves to the assembly fund at 31 December 2016, provided that the general reserves remain above the required target after the transfer; and

(ii) delegate to the leadership of the finance sub-committee the authority to approve and authorise for issue the financial statements 2016.

Discussion

Dr Quawas was concerned about the first recommendation (i). He noted that he was worried about the wording, but not about the principle. He asked what will happen if there is not enough money? For example, if there is only CHF 150,000 above required target, then this is a challenge.

Mr Lemopoulos suggested revising the wording as follows: “require a transfer up to CHF 250,000”. Dr Quawas shared that the targeted reserve could also be above CHF 250,000; but stated if this wording is what is wanted, then that is okay. The executive committee agreed that it could be less, but not more. The revised wording was approved by consensus.

Metropolitan Gennadios asked about the budget of the assembly. Ms Dykes clarified that one transfer has already been made. The first transfer was about CHF 1 million, and the aim is to reach CHF 1.8 million by 2018.

The revised recommendations read as follows:

The finance sub-committee **recommends** that executive committee:

(i) **require** that a transfer of up to CHF 250,000 be made from the general reserves to the assembly fund at 31 December 2016, provided that the general reserves remain above the required target after the transfer; and

(ii) **delegate** to the leadership of the finance sub-committee the authority to approve and authorise for issue the financial statements 2016.

These revised recommendations were approved by consensus.

5.3.2 REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The finance sub-committee observed that a new professional member is expected to be identified during the coming months, and that he or she should be invited to attend the next meeting of the audit committee in April 2017, when the draft financial statements are to be reviewed with the auditors. It is important that a new professional member be appointed in 2017, because the moderator, who is a professional member and volunteer, has announced his intention to step down from the responsibility in 2017. The terms of reference for the audit committee state that:

> "Members of the audit committee shall be appointed by executive committee (…). Names of professional members shall be offered by the audit committee or by the general secretary to the executive committee for appointment."

The executive committee will not meet until June 2017.

The finance sub-committee recommends that in this instance, executive committee delegate to the leadership of the finance sub-committee the authority to appoint a new professional member to the audit committee, on the recommendation of the general secretary.

Discussion

Dr Quawas shared that in his understanding, there was a resignation of the two professionals and not only the moderator. Ms Dykes clarified that only one person has indicated that he would like to resign during 2017. Dr Quawas asked about leaving it open, rather than mentioning a number? Dr Abuom shared that what we have now is that one person has offered to step down. Ms Dykes shared that we cannot be sure that the second person might also retire. Dr Quawas shared that it would be good if we can empower the leadership to be open so that they can fill vacancies as they come up. Dr Quawas suggested alternative wording: "to appoint one or more professional members".

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that this must be a provision up to June. He also noted that we should only say "new professional members"; this will cover everything. If we really want to appoint four new people, then we need to bring this discussion back to our June 2017 meeting.

This change was accepted by consensus.

The revised recommendation reads as follows:

> The finance sub-committee **recommends** that in this instance, executive committee **delegate** to the leadership of the finance sub-committee the authority to appoint one or more professional members to

the audit committee, on the recommendation of the general secretary.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5.3.3 INCOME DEVELOPMENT

The sub-committee expressed gratitude for the generous support of WCC member churches, specialized ministries and ecumenical partners whose faithful contributions make the work of the fellowship possible. The committee then reviewed progress with income development as measured against the milestones established by the central committee in 2014, and as summarised in Doc. No. 05 *Report on progress with the financial strategy 2014-2017, including update on income development*.

(i) Membership contributions

With regard to 2016 membership contributions, the sub-committee noted that as at 1 November, 174 (50%) of member churches had contributed CHF 3.5 million, and the sub-committee encouraged efforts to strengthen the results by the year-end, particularly in terms of the number of churches contributing (2015: 193 [56%] member churches contributed).

The sub-committee referred to the progress report on membership contributions reviewed by the central committee in June 2016. On the launch of the new membership contributions plan in 2014, the contributions in 2012 were taken as the point of reference. Requests were made to member churches to contribute at the level of 2012 or 2013, whichever was higher, and to consider increasing contributions by at least 2%. In 2015, 100 member churches had responded by increasing their contribution in original currency by an average of 19%, and 14 member churches which had not contributed in 2014 made a contribution in 2015.

The sub-committee expressed gratitude for the commitment of the Evangelical Church in Germany to increase its membership contribution in 2017 as an expression of solidarity with this trend.

The sub-committee supported the observation raised by the general secretary in his report (Doc. No. 01, section 4, para 2) that:

> "There are many churches that responded positively to our efforts to stabilise or increase their financial contributions to the WCC, according to the initiatives we have decided upon. But there are still many member churches who could contribute more regularly and some more substantially, in all confessional families and continents."

(ii) Programme contributions

The sub-committee reviewed an analysis of programme contributions over the past ten years. In addition, an analysis of programme contributions for 2013 compared to budget 2017 demonstrated that of a total reduction of CHF 2.5 million, the foreign currency impact was CHF 1.8 million. Net reductions in programme contributions in original currency over the four years was therefore only CHF 0.7 million.

The sub-committee heard a report on initiatives which had raised funds, or were expected to bring results in the future:

- celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, strengthening the Bossy alumni relations;
- joint initiatives with "shared programming", where activities are implemented together with the ecumenical partners, with examples involving ICCO, the Council for World Mission and Norwegian Church Aid;
- increased funding from UN related agencies, including UNAIDS, through a grant from PEPFAR, the US President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief; and
- development of a plan for funding the World Mission Conference in 2018, with the goal of raising CHF 0.9 million in 2017 and 2018.

The sub-committee referred to the recommendation of the central committee in June 2016 which had required that the executive committee "re-examine the decision to form a fundraising advisory group, and determine whether such group should be formed, or not" (cf. Report of the Finance Policy Committee GEN FIN 07). The recommendation that executive committee approve a mandate for a fund-raising advisory group with a proposal for nominations had first been raised by central committee in July 2014.

The sub-committee took account of the reasons why the group had not been formed, and also noted that a new income development plan would require to be prepared, for the four-year planning period 2018-2021.

The finance sub-committee **recommends** that the executive committee **require** that:
(i) a draft income development plan for 2018-2021 be presented for discussion at the next meeting, as an integral part of the *WCC Financial Strategy 2018 to 2021*; and
(ii) the decision to form a fundraising reference group, or not, be reflected in the income development plan for 2018-2021.

Discussion

In response to some questions, Ms Dykes confirmed that the most recent instruction of the central committee was to re-examine the decision about whether to form a fundraising group or not. The latest recommendation from the central committee asked whether such a group should be formed or not. Further, the central committee will be invited to make the final decision concerning the fundraising advisory group.

Dr Quawas asked who had taken the decision to form the fundraising group. It was clarified that the central committee decided to form the fundraising group in 2014. Then, the central committee revised its decision in 2016. Ms Dykes reminded that following the decision to form a fundraising advisory group, the executive committee did not make any proposals for its membership. The central committee noticed that and asked the executive committee to re-consider the whole issue.

Dr Abuom confirmed that in the executive committee's accountability report to the central committee it was said that the group had not been named. The central committee then asked the executive committee to decide about this.

Rev. Dr Gardner shared that in looking at the strategy for 2018-2021, a recommendation till go to the central committee in 2018 whether or not a fundraising advisory group is needed.

Dr Abuom clarified that the income development plan is considered by the executive committee, and then brought it to the central committee meeting in 2018.

With these clarifications, this recommendation was approved by consensus.

5.3.4 BUDGET 2017

The sub-committee reviewed the draft budget 2017 (appendix 2 to Doc. No. 03), with total income of CHF 25.8 million, costs of CHF 26.3 million, and a total net reduction in funds and reserves of CHF 0.5 million. The Bossey guest house and conference centre is included in the budget with a break-even result.

Total income budgeted, at CHF 25.8 million, is CHF 0.9 million higher than the total income forecast for 2016, and includes CHF 0.6 million in funds to be raised for the World Mission Conference in 2018.

The sub-committee discussed budget risks and opportunities, which included the following:

- at this stage, 64% (CHF 9.2 million) of programme contributions are pledged, or are reliable contributions not normally subject to written confirmation; the remainder 36% (CHF 5.2 million) of contributions is to be the subject of proposals to be submitted, or agreements to be concluded;
- within the 36%, CHF 1 million concerns special funding contracts to be renewed with UN agencies and the Swiss department of foreign affairs;
- foreign exchange rates budgeted have been based on forecast views for 2017 from major banks, however it is noted that current rates are slightly lower;
- the "fund for priority areas" includes a budgeted unallocated balance of CHF 60,500, which may be allocated by the general secretary as needs arise during the year; and
- the draft budget did not include a provision of CHF 250,000 for central committee 2018, in accordance with usual practice, and thus presented the risk that all of central committee's costs would require to be covered in one year's contributions.

It was reported that an adjustment was to be made to the draft budget to staff costs, removing one executive vacancy, in order that the programme deficit of CHF 87,000 included in the draft budget, and explained in the *Finance Overview* (Doc. No. 02), be resolved, and the budget presented as balanced. The sub-committee concurred with this adjustment.

The finance sub-committee encourages fund-raising efforts to increase the executive staff capacity.

Following adjustment, the draft budget includes total income of CHF 25.8 million, and total expenditure of CHF 26.2 million, with a total reduction in funds and reserves of CHF 0.4 million.

The finance sub-committee **recommends** that executive committee:

(i) **approve** the budget 2017 as adjusted, presenting a balanced programme budget, with no deficit to be charged to general reserves;

(ii) **require** that a report be presented to executive committee at its next meeting on the "fund for priority areas", reporting on expenditures incurred in 2016 and 2017, further to the plan reviewed at executive committee in June 2016.

Discussion

Dr Quawas commented on the total of funds and reserves and asked if they could be separated so that we know these numbers specifically. Ms Dykes shared that the reduction from the general reserves would be CHF 0.1. She shared that the budget includes CHF 87,000 including the deficit. Then, there would be various movements within the funds. If we want to segregate, it is CHF 0.1 charged to general reserves.

Ms Dykes referred to Doc 03; there is an appendix showing the draft budget and each of the funds is set out separately. One can follow in the various columns where the funds are; the details are not all set out in this report.

Dr Quawas asked about the figure of CHF 9.2 million. He shared that this is not normally subject to written confirmation; and he wondered if we can work on changing this reality in the future. It is noted that "at this stage, 64% (CHF 9.2 million) of programme contributions are pledged, or are reliable contributions not normally subject to written confirmation", and this is a risk. He asked if we can work on this in the future, as it will be more secure in the programmatic work. He is not objecting to the paragraph; he is suggesting other work to reduce the risk.

Ms Dykes shared that there are always possibilities of making the budget more secure by asking for more written confirmations. There are, however, things that are hard to secure: for example, how many EAPPI accompaniers will be there for a year; this is dealt with quarter by quarter. Similarly church contributions to the scholarship fund are frequently and very reliably received. One may not improve this collection by asking for this collection in advance, but where it is possible it can be done.

Dr Quawas asked if we can try to reduce the figure of 64% to a lower amount, knowing that we can never get it down to 0.

Rev. Dr Tveit said that it is important that our relationships with the donors are not only based on written papers. We should not move in this direction because it could create a situation of mistrust. This could damage relations, and we may not necessarily get more funds by doing this. Dr Abuom agreed that it is also important to be aware of dynamics.

Dr Quawas noted that it is not an issue of mistrust but is an issue of good governance. A written pledge is much stronger than a contract. We need to document our issues. Sometimes we will have risks where someone pledges CHF 100,000, and then they have a crisis and can only give CHF 50,000. Rev. Dr Gardner stated that this can happen whether we have a written pledge or not. The executive committee decided not to make any changes to the recommendation.

<u>This recommendation was approved by consensus.</u>

5.3.5 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

It was reported that capital expenditure in 2016 was forecast to total CHF 0.6 million compared with the revised budget of CHF 0.7 million. In 2016, one significant investment was the resurfacing of the access road to the Château de Bossey, for CHF 115,000, as budgeted.

The sub-committee reviewed the capital expenditure plans for 2017, totalling CHF 0.5 million. The total includes CHF 0.3 million for further work at Bossey, where the balcony in the student residence requires renovation for safety reasons, at CHF 0.1 million.

The finance sub-committee **recommends** that executive committee **approve** the capital expenditure limit of CHF 518,000 for 2017.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5.3.6 GENERAL RESERVES

General reserves are defined as those funds available to the Council after meeting its obligations and commitments, and without realising fixed assets.

A profile outlining the expected evolution of the general reserves was presented. It was confirmed from review of the profile and the assumptions, that the general reserves were expected to be at target level at 31 December 2017, after taking account of both a transfer of CHF 250,000 to the assembly fund, and a transfer of CHF 250,000 to programme funds for the central committee 2018.

The profile showed, however, that the general reserves level could not be sustained at the target if reimbursements related to the loan of CHF 24 million were required from 2017. At the end of 2019, in the model reviewed, general reserves would fall to CHF 5 million.

The finance sub-committee encourages efforts to be made to negotiate a further period without reimbursement after March 2017, when the loan is to be renewed.

The finance sub-committee **recommends** that executive committee **require** that a report be brought concerning the renewal of the loan contract at its next meeting.

Discussion

Dr Abuom asked if paragraph 2 could reflect what was noted earlier on, in terms of it being “a transfer up to CHF 250,000”. Ms Dykes noted that this particular recommendation is with respect to a different year. In the earlier recommendation we were looking at 2016 assuming that we could do it within this year with the approval of the executive committee. She shared that, in paragraph 2, information is for 2017, and we would need to come with a separate approval for this.

The question was therefore clarified.

Dr Quawas asked if the reduction in reserves will happen: the executive committee has asked that it stays at that level.

Ms Dykes shared that the third paragraph may not be 100% clear. At the end of 2018, the reserves would fall only if we are required to make reimbursements to the loan. They are hopeful that they will not need to make reimbursements; this is a worse-case scenario.

Dr Quawas asked for a change to the text make it clearer; suggested adding: “if reimbursement is required, then…”.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that there are other elements involved here and there could be other sources of income. The drawing on reserves does not have to happen. He noted that the important thing is that we are aware of it, and we can make a further decision in June 2017 at the next executive committee meeting. Still, he noted that if we know that we have to make reimbursements, then we can take other measures. We do not just have to wait and watch a drop in the reserves. The general secretary suggested that we change “would” to “could”, so that it reads as “general reserves could fall to CHF 5 million”.

Dr Abuom reminded the executive committee that this is a worse-case scenario.

Ms Dykes proposed the wording: “General reserves could fall to 5 million if such reimbursements were made” to help make it clearer. Rev. Dr Tveit added the suggestion: “and no other compensating income was received”.

The revised paragraph now reads as:

The profile showed, however, that the general reserves level could not be sustained at the target if reimbursements related to the loan of CHF 24 million were required from 2017. At the end of 2019, in the model reviewed, general reserves could fall to CHF 5 million if such reimbursements were made and no other compensating income was received.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5.3.7 COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY FOR OFFICES OUTSIDE SWITZERLAND

A self-evaluation of compliance with policy was presented, as required by the policy itself.

It was discussed whether the policy direction for the EHAIA offices was tenable, being based on the assumption that a local host organisation would employ local staff, funded by WCC, and would provide treasury services. Exceptions to policy on these two aspects have been reported over several years, and in 2016, one host organisation has ceased providing treasury services.

The sub-committee discussed the actions taken to bring two further EHAIA offices into compliance with social security laws, by contracting the staff concerned through a local employment agent. It is anticipated that three out of five offices will therefore be in compliance with local labour laws and regulations by the year end.

In one country in Africa, there have been recommendations from the auditors and from a lawyer to register formally, in order to comply with tax regulations.

The sub-committee **recommends** that executive committee:

(i) **support** the policy of working with host organisations within the ecumenical network wherever possible, broadening efforts to find new host organisations as necessary, while taking into account any legal opinions received concerning registration in a country, in bringing conclusion to the issues; and

(ii) **require** that a progress report be presented at the next meeting

Discussion

Dr Quawas asked for further explanation concerning registration. He noted that in some countries, registration would have a negative impact on the work of the WCC, so wonders why we are putting this here. Rev. Dr Gardner said that it would be registration required where possible. Ms Dykes shared that if there is a recommendation from a lawyer or auditor, then one must take it into account. One should consider the risks and consequences and make a decision in this light.

Dr Abuom wondered whether the recommendation is in line with the policy of the WCC. Do the professional opinions, in as much as they may be valued, concur with the policies of the Council? Even if we receive professional opinions, we still need to weigh them in terms of what works best for the WCC. Ms Dykes said that we still need to operate within the laws and regulations of the country.

The explanation was a helpful clarification.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5.3.8 FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2018-2021

The finance sub-committee reviewed the preliminary financial scenarios for 2018-2021. The stable income profile, recommended by central committee, reflected CHF 19 million of programme income. An alternative profile reflected an annual decrease of 2% from budget 2017, with total programme income at CHF 17.8 million in 2021.

The finance sub-committee discussed the initial approach to the assembly fund, in which six transfers of CHF 250,000 from general reserves are planned to be made annually to the fund between 2016 and 2021.

It was recognised that the first transactions in the real estate project should take place from 2019, and that the financial strategy for the period would require to include transition plans for archives removal, management of tenants' contracts, and the impact of possible reduction in rental income in 2021, should a wing of the Ecumenical Centre be demolished at that date.

The finance sub-committee supported the recommendation of central committee to plan with a stable strategy, but recommended that a plan should also be developed to address the alternative scenario. The finance sub-committee noted that prioritisation criteria had been prepared in 2015, to address a requirement of central committee in 2014 that "categorisation of projects be further developed, considering the terms "indispensable, important and desirable", and that reference should be made to the prioritisation criteria in preparing the alternative scenario.

The finance sub-committee **recommends** that the executive committee **require** that the financial strategy for 2018-2021 be further developed, with outcome indicators, and be presented for review by executive committee at the next meeting.

Discussion

In response to a question, Ms Dykes shared that the finance committee reviewed a document FIN 05 which was a preliminary document; it was not well developed. It needs to be developed along with the strategic plans for the programme work. It needs to incorporate work that was mentioned in the programme report.

Dr Quawas asked if this document was available to the executive committee.

Ms Dykes clarified that it was a working document of the finance sub-committee, but it was available to all members of the executive committee. It was also shared in preliminary form in June 2016.

Dr Quawas asked that as the document gets developed further if it can be made available on SharePoint, so that all executive committee members could access it. This was agreed.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5.3.9 INVESTMENTS

The sub-committee reviewed the report on the WCC's investments which totalled CHF 17.4 million at 30 September 2016. It was confirmed that the investments are managed in accordance with the investment policy. The investments reported an accumulated net gain for the nine months to 30 September 2016 of CHF 302,000.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5.3.10 OTHER MATTERS

The finance sub-committee reviewed a report on issues raised from prior meetings. All issues had been addressed, or have been addressed in the above report, with the exception of one point.

In 2013, the assembly finance committee had recommended to central committee that a policy be developed "defining the criteria for introducing new projects within the strategic four-year programme plan." The finance sub-committee concluded that any new project would be related to a new source of funding, and should therefore be subject to the reviews and approvals indicated in the policy for screening new funding partners, implemented in 2016. The finance sub-committee requested that the matter be removed from the list of outstanding points.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

With all of the changes to the report of the finance sub-committee, the report as a whole was approved.

5.3.11 REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The general secretary presented the report. It was noted that this report is for information. It was clarified that the steering committee is appointed by the central committee, and it is composed of both central committee and executive committee members. The steering committee is accountable to the central committee; however, in between central committee meetings, the committee has to report to the executive committee.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima wanted to be sure that there was a balance on the group, including gender balance. He asked about the composition of the group.

Bishop Swenson commented that some of the members of the group who are not on the executive committee received the information about what would be discussed at this meeting, and sent in comments. Still, she noted that we need to look at the balances.

Rev. Dr Tveit provided the composition of the committee (see p. 66).

REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The steering committee met to address the following objectives:

- to hear the report on work conducted by real estate consultants, being a step described in the report of the finance policy committee in June 2016;
- to develop an approach for determining the sales strategy best suited to meeting the project objectives;
- to consider a response to Implenia, which had requested that the WCC sales strategy be defined, validating the first phase of the project; and
- to develop its risk strategy.

1. Members and advisors

The general secretary confirmed that Rev. Dr Paul Gardner had been invited to attend the steering committees from November 2016 onwards by the general secretary, and as approved by executive committee, pending validation of his appointment by central committee in 2018.

Requests have been sent to member churches for the nomination of three advisors to the steering committee. One nomination has been confirmed; and one member church has confirmed its intention to propose a nominee. Advisors duly appointed will be invited to the next meeting.

2. Development contract

A summary of the development contract was shared with central committee members in 2012. The summary will be shared with the current executive committee members.

The development contract is subject to conditions of confidentiality. With the respect due to those terms, the general secretary can facilitate consultation of the contract in the Ecumenical Centre by any executive committee member.

3. Report on work of the real estate consultants
The management summary from the consultancy reports highlighted three recommendations:

- the advantages of land lease;
- the need to test project finance models further before determining the strategy; and
- the importance of retaining flexibility, by validating only the first steps in the project in the first phase, retaining the right to adjust plans depending on the outcome of that phase.

4. Approach to the sales strategy
An approach to the sales strategy was demonstrated through a financial model aligned with Implenia's project timeline. The model presented the following:

- Sale of 20% of the land (for building E) on the Ecumenical Centre site, in order to reimburse the pension fund loan;
- Retention of all of the remaining plot;
- Land lease contracts for four buildings on the site (C, D, F and G), generating income annually from 2023;
- Receipt of a real estate margin on five buildings, bought by third parties from Implenia (C, D, E, F and G);
- Construction of the office building B for the WCC, generating modest rental income from 2025; and renovation of the main building.

The transactions were completed between 2019 to 2027 in the model. In 2027, WCC would hold a new building and renovated main building valued at CHF 56 million (on a cost basis), with a construction loan balance of CHF 8 million outstanding; own 80% of its current plot; benefit from land lease income and rental income generating CHF 3 million annually; and have reimbursed the pension fund loan as an initial step.

5. Risk strategy
The steering committee reviewed a report listing risks under the following categories:

- Overall strategic risks
- Delay in reimbursing CHF 24 million
- Market risk
- Delays during the process
- Construction risks
- Transition risks
- Renting and tenants
- VAT

The report estimated the likelihood of each risk occurring with weightings high, low or medium, and indicated a quantification of the risk in financial terms.

6. Conclusions
The steering committee required that:

(i) Further sales models be developed for review, in particular considering the possibility of owning:
    - building C, rather than building B;
    - buildings B and G, as an example of a higher risk profile, with regard to debt equity ratio.

(ii) A further discussion be undertaken with Implenia, to explore their proposal that the real estate margin might be replaced by a fixed "goodwill payment", intended to reduce risk for WCC, and reduce its commitment to participate as an active partner in the development period;

(iii) A decision validating the first phase of the sales strategy be made at executive committee in June 2017, when steps (i) and (ii) have been further explored, and further consultation has been made within the steering committee, together with the advisors to be appointed by the general secretary; and

(iv) At its next meeting, the risk assessment be presented as a monitoring tool, to be updated for any new findings.

Discussion

Dr Quawas asked whether the amount of 56 million is for both demolition and renovation. He also asked what summary would be shared with the executive committee members.

Ms Dykes shared that the 56 million figure concerns both the construction of building B and the renovation of the main building where there is the Chapel and the plenary hall – this is protected by the Geneva Heritage Authority. When we speak of both demolition and renovation, it is because one building needs to be protected. It cannot be demolished but must be renovated. This is a requirement of the authorities.

The summary will include the main points of the development contract since questions were raised by this committee about its content. These main points were distributed to central committee members in 2012.

With this information, the report was received as an update to the executive committee.

6. Programme

6.1 First Presentation on Programme

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a hearing session.

He invited Rev. Dr Watkins to give an overview of the various programme documents that will come to the programme sub-committee for consideration. Rev. Dr Watkins referred the executive committee to the "Summary of Programme Plans for 2017". Both Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca (Romanian Orthodox Church), WCC associate general secretary, education and ecumenical formation and director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, and Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri (Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa), WCC associate general secretary for public witness and diakonia, offered a brief overview of their work and highlighted what was new; the rest of the programme work is described in detail in the plans. Rev. Dr Watkins noted the broad scope of the programmes. The programme sub-committee will work on this during their meeting.

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo asked about the plan related to the Democratic Republic of Congo. According to the 2013 Busan Assembly, it was named as a priority country until 2017 or 2018. Her worry is that it looks like there is no progress. What kind of actions will happen? Churches do not know what is being done that would be support the churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Prof. Dr Phiri responded by sharing that workshops were in preparation for the upcoming presidential elections in the Congo. The churches then said that this should be postponed to the next year. The Democratic Republic of Congo is still a priority country and the work will continue.

Rev. Dr Watkins then outlined the document on the "Follow up for Recommendations on Programmatic Work", which was presented in the report of the programme committee of the central committee in June 2016. Prof. Dr Phiri and Fr. Prof. Dr Sauca offered highlights from the document.

Dr Quawas commented on the issue of religion and violence; this is an excellent programme and there is a need to do this in regions where there is conflict.

Secondly, he spoke about the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). He shared that the evaluation team worked hard. He hopes that EAPPI will go on to its first track when it was established in 2000 and all the negative points will be taken into consideration. He still has the impression that some stronger local staff have to be appointed. An international coordinator alone is not enough.

At the same time, Dr Quawas felt strongly that the recommendation from the security advisor to take a stand away from boycott-divestment-sanctions (BDS) to clarify its position. The WCC needs to work on both lines, especially since the BDS is gaining fruits from this programme. It should be specified that sanctions are only for settlements which are built on illegal lands. The position of the WCC is clear on this issue.

Rev. Dr Watkins then referred to the document "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Reference Group Update", and outlined the decisions that the executive committee will need to make about this, after it is discussed by the programme sub-committee. There is information for discussion and for action.

Rev. Dr Watkins referred to the document "Update on Integration of WCC – Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance", and offered highlights from the document. The programme sub-committee is being asked to reflect on this and to offer advice. The sub-committee will also need to consider the "Ecumenical Diakonia Study Update".

Rev. Dr Watkins then mentioned that the sub-committee will review a document on "Principles and Tools for Child-Friendly Churches". The general secretary stated that it will be important to read this document from two perspectives. One, the document as such will not go to the member churches. What goes to the member churches is his letter and appendices. The letter will talk about why churches should involve children more. It will be an invitation to the churches whether they find it proper and possible, to participate in this effort and to commit themselves to some of these principles.

Rev. Dr Watkins stated that the programme sub-committee will consider the document "Back to Back WCC Executive Committee meeting and ACT Alliance Assembly".

Dr John Nduna, ACT Alliance general secretary, was invited to speak about this more, since it involves ACT Alliance. He shared that there has been a team who has meet to discuss the back-to-back meetings of the ACT general assembly and the WCC executive committee. It is proposed to have this meeting in October/November 2018. He shared that this was important for ACT Alliance. They feel it is urgent to have the venue and to decide on the hosting for their general assembly. Once these decisions are made, it would also imply the venue for the executive committee of the WCC.

For this reason the request has come to this executive committee to empower the general secretary to work with the ACT secretariat to finalize this so that they can proceed with preparations for the assembly. The theme and the focus will be different; they cannot have a common theme for ACT general assembly and the WCC executive committee meeting. However, there is one day when there will be a joint consultation. Diakonia and sustainable development could possibly be the theme for the joint meeting. They are requesting the executive committee to empower the general secretary to go ahead. From the ACT side, they have already contacted the ACT Alliance regional forum to see if they can offer hosting from one of the members in Europe. Europe is the preferred region at the moment. The finalization of this could be done as soon as possible.

He noted that the work done so far is to contact the members of ACT Alliance in Europe for the hosting. They do not yet have any concrete responses, but they feel they can speed up the process once they have finalized the dates. Rev. Dr Tveit shared that this will then be the executive committee meeting of the fall of 2018. In June of that year there will be the executive and central committee meetings in Geneva. The meeting outside of Geneva can be in Europe. It will still fit with WCC's cycle.

Rev. Dr Watkins presented the final document, which is the "Communications Update and Strategy".

Dr Abuom raised a question about communications. There is a large gap in the digital divide. In places in Africa, people do not know what is going on. Many church people are in the dark. If information gets to the member churches, it only gets to a few church leaders at the top. There are many member churches deep in rural areas that need to receive the information. It would be helpful if the programme sub-committee could reflect on this.

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo added to what Dr Abuom said, but particularly related to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP). She remembered that in South Africa the theme of the WCC was given to the students to write an article. She wonders if they can do this related to the PJP. Many people do not understand yet the PJP; we should reflect on this.

Rev. Antonio Matamoros suggested that theological seminaries could be invited to work on the PJP and report on their work after a few years.

Rev. Dr Watkins pointed to several documents related to the evaluation of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI): "EAPPI Evaluation – Process and Timeline", "WCC EAPPI Evaluation 2016 Management Response", and "EAPPI Final Report Evaluation for WCC and EAPPI".

Ms Marianne Ejdersten, WCC director of communications, was invited to speak about the Evaluation of the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). It was the first real evaluation since the programme began fifteen years ago. She was assigned to organize the evaluation.

Ms Ejdersten shared the main findings, conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation process of EAPPI.

Relevance of the programme:

- 100% of respondents consider the programme was relevant in 2002 at its identification and gave an adequate answer to the needs of the population;
- 98% of respondents consider the programme still relevant as per today needs;
- Only 68% consider it highly relevant. This is related to the absence of an updated needs assessment;
- The three components of EAPPI – protective presence, monitoring and report of human rights violations (HRV), and advocacy – correspond to the priorities identified by the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the occupied Palestinian territory;
- Heads of churches interviewed by the evaluation team believe the programme answers their need to talk against injustice and, therefore, the mission and vision of the programme meet their needs and values; but the heads of churches feel there is a growing disconnection with the programme.

Recommendations:

- WCC should lead an open and highly participatory process where all actors (national coordinators, local churches, WCC, local reference group and other relevant stakeholders) may re-assess the vision, the mission and the methodology of the programme; and where the roles of each actor, the level of involvement, and the ownership will be defined and agreed on.
- EAPPI should consider conducting regular needs assessments – with qualitative and quantitative approach to update the needs and problems to be addressed through the programme activities;
- EAPPI should conduct a mapping exercise where the areas of work of other donors, agencies, international and local organisations will be identified.

Effectiveness:

Protective Presence

- The totality of respondents considers that the protective presence objectives have been achieved to some extent, though there is place for improvement in the methodology, communication, coordination and accountability aspects.

Advocacy:

- There is an extended feeling among WCC-EAPPI staff, stakeholders and right holders that the advocacy objectives have not been fully reached and that the advocacy work and strategies are not effective enough.

Coordination and relation with the communities:

- The programme is well known by organisations and local actors, yet there is a lack of systematisation on the communication and coordination activities.
- Many stakeholders consider the coordination and networking activities poor,
- There is a growing feeling of disconnection between the local churches and the programme.

Recommendations:

- EAPPI should develop a strategic plan including advocacy and protection components.
- EAPPI should follow the logical framework as a reference tool during the implementation, follow-up and reporting of all its programmes and activities.
- EAPPI should develop a global strategy for the advocacy component where objectives, targets and expected time frame results and indicators are detailed.

- EAPPI should study the identified successful advocacy experiences and apply the lessons learnt in a wider scale;
- Minimum standards should be developed and shared by all national coordinators in terms of advocacy work; WCC may use its own global experience in advocacy to support and enhance the EAPPI strategies; and
- The advisory role of the local reference group should be reinforced and clearly outlined, as well as its possible assistance in enhancing the awareness and visibility capacities of EAPPI at the local level

Impact

Protective Presence

- All the communities where EAPPI provide its protective presence suffer from different forms and levels of violence and most participants in focus groups discussions expressed the protective presence has a positive impact in their lives or the lives of other members of their communities.
- 98% of the communities visited expressed they feel that the level of violence decrease with the presence of ecumenical accompaniers (EAs).

Level of violence; intensity and frequency

Name of Placement	Communities visited	Level of violence. Intensity	Level of violence. Frequency
Jerusalem	Wadi Al Joz	Extreme	Extreme
	Khan Al Ahmar	High	High
Bethlehem	Jubbet Adh Dhib	Extreme	High
	Al Ma'sara	Extreme	High
Hebron	Old City	Severe	Severe
South Hebron Hills	Susiya	Extreme	Severe
	Bir Al Eid	Extreme	Medium
Jordan Valley	Al Jiftlik	Severe	Medium
Janoun	Janoun	Medium	Medium
Tulkarem	Jalal Aziz	Severe	Extreme
	Atlil	High	High

- EAPPI activities designed to facilitate the access to school to boys and girls victim of extreme violence have a high impact in the lives of students and families, and communities at large.
- EAPPI activities designed to support the freedom of movement's right of Palestinians have a high impact in the lives of the communities, especially in the lives of the farmers and their families.

- Despite the impact on the lives of the communities, EAPPI is not highly contributing to the resilience of the communities, because the programme is not designed to address resilience aspects.
- The lack of an updated and holistic risk analysis prevents EAPPI form contributing to enhance resilience at the target communities

Advocacy

- There it is certain lack of accountability with the local communities and information about advocacy initiatives is not officially shared.
- The impact of advocacy at large, both at the national and international level, is very difficult to measure in the short term, since the objectives are very vague and ambitious. Nevertheless, there are powerful evidences about the success and impact of EAPPI advocacy activities in changing the opinion of civil society and policy makers at the international level

Coordination

- EAPPI is a member of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Protection Cluster and the Education Cluster and participates in several working groups at the mentioned clusters.
- Many members of the clusters interviewed consider EAPPI could have a more relevant role in the cluster and even lead some of the working groups due to their large presence on the field and their unique capacity of coverage.

Recommendations

- In order to ensure the measurement of the impact and results in the future, the evaluation recommends introducing specific methodologies, such as baseline and endline surveys.
- EAPPI should systematise the information sharing with the communities and the local stakeholders. In this regard, EAPPI may consider the possibility of having an annual newsletter in Arabic and Hebrew with the main achievements and challenges faced by the programme to be shared with the communities and partner organisations;
- In order to assure that right holders have access to other services not provided by EAPPI, a clear referral system must be developed to guide the ecumenical accompaniers and Jerusalem office staff during the process, making it more effective and efficient.

Efficiency and Accountability

At management and coordination level:

- Emerging best practices relate to OCHA and UNICEF work, which have introduced new requirements for monitoring and evaluations, setting measurable objectives
- Orientation and training: some national coordinators are implementing a very deep and relevant training and could share their knowledge and expertise with the rest of sending organisations.
- The design and establishment of the HUB to centralize and share all relevant information between ecumenical accompaniers and WCC EAPPI offices

At protection level:

- One of the most successful activities that many consider should be replicated in other locations is the access to education programme.

- It has proven to be one of the most successful activities and it has improved EAPPI's position and reputation within the humanitarian sector; UNICEF considers EAPPI a key and strategic partner.

At advocacy level:

- At the local level, some sending organisations (e.g. from Scandinavian countries) request from their EAs to visit and inform their consulates and diplomatic representatives about the programme and their activities.
- Also at the local level, there is good record of past in depth thematic reports (e.g. Education under Occupation)
- In the past, there was a newsletter title "Tadamon" (solidarity, in Arabic) and it was a very useful instrument to share information on EAPPI with Palestinian local communities, especially the advocacy work undertaken by the EAs back home;
- At the international advocacy level, there are many good practices implemented in single countries that could be coordinated and replicated in other countries, e.g. meeting with members of parliament before the beginning of the voluntary service, to establish the connections prior to the advocacy work *per se*.
- The *Lobby Week* organised by EAPPI at the European Union since 2012, could be replicated in other regions, e.g. Global South.

Cost-effectiveness

- The programme has lacked of a cost-effectiveness analysis to assess the degree to which the programme would have benefited the largest number of people at the lowest reasonable cost. Since results have not been measured against the costs of the activities is not possible to conclude the level of cost effectiveness of the programme.

Recommendations

- To encourage the EAs to learn some basic Arabic prior to its participation in the programme is highly recommended and to prioritize the selection of Arabic speakers as EAs;
- As part of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process, EAPPI should improve the design for its technical reports;
- WCC EAPPI should consider including a specific budget line allocated to the training and capacity building of the staff in security, monitoring, evaluation, logical framework, gender mainstreaming, humanitarian policies, etc.
- EAPPI should include regular evaluation processes in their M&E plans; allocating human resources to M&E is recommended;
- In order to improve the communication and coordination between stakeholders, clear protocols on communication sharing and reporting should be established (regular meetings, internal reports, etc.);
- All stakeholders should be aware of the criteria for entering and exiting placements.
- EAPPI should develop a clear exit strategy where the role of the different stakeholders is defined;
- To improve the security, wellbeing and the possibilities of safe and confidential handling of complaints, EAPPI should develop a safeguarding policy addressed to staff, EAs and right holders, where specific protocols and mitigation measures must be included; and
- EAPPI should conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis of the programme in order to design more accurate funding strategy and financial monitoring system.

Gender

- The gender approaches have not been sufficiently integrated and made visible enough at programmatic and organisational level.
- The gender approach is informal – focused on a quantitative point of view – and the programme does not consider gender as a crosscutting and/or transversal component in most of plans and materials.
- Women and girls are included in the activities and programming – no evidence of discrimination was found – but EAPPI has not developed any specific tool or system to identify and collate the needs and demands of Palestinian women and girls suffering violence by the Israeli army or settlers.
- Protection services and/or awareness raising activities are conducted without gender approaches.

Recommendations

- EAPPI should start mainstreaming gender sensitivity as a crosscutting element at strategic level and through the whole conception of the programme (e.g. research and needs assessment, definition of the target groups, implementation of the activities, etc.);
- The gender sensitive approach should be also a crosscutting issue within WCC, programme and partner organisations. Therefore, WCC should encourage and support them to increase the gender-sensitive approach at strategic/programme level (e.g. gender capacity building, gender training sessions, gender manuals and policies, etc.).

Conflict Sensitivity

- EAPPI's is impartial between the parties and uses an approach of principled impartiality, meaning that EAPPI agrees on the UN resolutions regarding the Israeli occupation and on Israel's obligations based on international humanitarian law.
- As a humanitarian actor, EAPPI has had the capacity to contribute to a just peace and increase protection – for example, through positive communication outlets and mechanisms for cooperation – and it has been providing non-violent means to work together and to address contentious issues, demonstrating alternatives to the conflict.
- On the other hand, conflict sensitivity is not mainstreamed in the programme, both at technical and financial level;
- During the last year, there has been an increase in tensions and violence in the region that has resulted in an increase of the security risks to EAPPI staff, EAs, rights holders and partners.
- There is a security matrix and guidelines for the EAs with a contingency plan and risk analysis included; EAs learn about these materials and their usage during the orientation sessions.
- But, there is a lack of an integral security framework or a formal security plan;
- There is not risk analysis or conflict analysis conducted systematically

Recommendations

- EAPPI should conduct a holistic conflict and risk analysis linked to a security plan to ensure all needed protocols and mitigation measures are in place to face new challenges; and
- EAPPI should intensify the training of EAs in conflict sensitivity related issues to avoid bad practices and impacts and to ensure the rule of the 'Do not harm' principle.

Sustainability

- The level of ownership and leadership of the programme by WCC is not always clear and sufficient to all stakeholders, especially when it comes to management and implementation.
- There is a lack of clear terms of reference for each position (e.g. roles, responsibilities), which leads to confusion at the time of conducting one's tasks. This has a direct impact at management level – e.g. no proper orientation, not enough field visits where EAs are – and at operational level, e.g. no clear priorities, duplication and lack of coordination for specific tasks, for example, at the time of crisis.
- There is a lack of relevant management positions with background in the humanitarian aid sector that could enhance the leadership of the programme and the possibilities of obtaining funds from UN agencies and other humanitarian donors;
- The programme does not have a proper capacity building plan for the staff linked to the strategic plan of the programme; by improving staff capacities (management and operational), they will be improving the general functioning and future of the programme.
- The budget is not shared with all the stakeholders. Respondents have questioned the financial transparency when it comes to funding, allocation of funds and the expenditure in the programme.
- There is a lack of a global institutional funding strategy linked to the general strategy for all the components of the programme.
- Since WCC-EAPPI is not registered in country, its access to local funds, e.g. OCHA Protection Cluster, EU call for proposals, UN agencies, etc. is limited.
- There is a lack of a proper risk analysis linked to a security strategy and protocol, for all stakeholders involved
    - The lack of an advocacy strategy results in a lack of shared and common goals, objectives and mapping of targets (per country and according to level of access and mobilisation, alignment of strategies, among others);
    - The expectations on EAPPI in terms of communications and advocacy are not sustainable unless capacities are increased or workloads are reassessed, reduced or shared

Recommendations

- WCC-EAPPI must open a participatory and deep discussion process where all relevant actors should participate – national coordinators, local churches, heads of churches, Christian related organizations, local reference groups, local communities, etc. – and where the mission, vision, objectives and methodology of the programme would be revisited and a general consensus, like the one obtained fifteen years ago, will be reached and signed again;
- There is a need to review all the manuals, protocols, plans and regulations in place, making sure that all versions shared in a transparent way with all stakeholders and, moreover, that all versions used are the final ones;
- EAPPI should be fully integrated within WCC government bodies and programmes:
- Jobs descriptions should be reviewed and updated and a needs assessment should be conducted in order to identify the current capacities existing within the staff as well as the main gaps and needs in order to perform their tasks in a satisfactory way;
- WCC-EAPPI should have an institutional funding strategy and/or fundraising sustainability plan to secure its current financial sources,
- EAPPI should employ experts on local and global grants and fundraising;
- WCC-EAPPI should be registered in country in order to access directly and independently to local funds, e.g. UN agencies, OCHA, EU.

- A detailed and global strategic advocacy strategy should be develop containing shared goals and objectives, mapping of targets (profile, type, access, mobilisation), expected results and timeline, impact and expected changes, etc.

Dr Quawas offered thanks to Ms Ejdersten for this presentation. He shared that it is helpful to implement the recommendations that came out. He hopes that there are Jewish-Israeli institutions advocating for the rights of Palestinians. It would be good to strengthen the programme by letting them be a part of it in the future.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that is important to bring the programme back, but also forward: bring it back to fulfil the initial intention and forward to really improve it further. He had attended the first presentation of the report with the many stakeholders, and it was very clear from the group who did the evaluation that this programme is probably the strongest programme of its kind in Israel Palestine. When stakeholders point to weaknesses, they mention that we do a lot and do a lot well, but can be more efficient. For example, the accompaniment component can be stronger. Weaknesses are mainly related to coordination and communication.

The general secretary commented that he was in Jerusalem in April 2016 to discuss the programme. He noted that it is very important that the evaluation be followed up under the leadership of Prof. Dr Phiri, working closely with the international coordinator, and the national coordinator. Moving forward, they will make it clearer that EAPPI is a WCC programme. It is organized with the partners, but the WCC has the responsibility to organize it and to monitor it.

Rev. Dr Watkins clarified that the sub-committee is being asked to receive the reports related to the evaluation of EAPPI.

6.2 Second Presentation on Programme

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session.

The executive committee was given additional time to talk about the reports to be referred to the programme sub-committee.

Dr Quawas asked about the programme on statelessness. He noted that the budget for this activity seems minimal. Is there a possibility to increase the budget? This would be taken up in the programme sub-committee.

6.3 Action on the Report of the Programme Sub-Committee

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a decision session.

He invited Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins to present the report of the programme sub-committee. Rev. Dr Watkins began by thanking the programme sub-committee; she particularly thanked Rev. Dr Hutabarat-Lebang who acted as rapporteur, assisted by Ms Ejdersten. She also offered thanks to the associate general secretaries and staff for their accompaniment throughout the meeting.

6.3.1 REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY (DOC. NO. 01)

The programme sub-committee recommends to the executive committee to:

1. **receive** with appreciation the Report of the General Secretary and affirm the work of the general secretary and staff.

2. **request** the general secretary to:

    a. **take into account** the participation of all stakeholders in WCC initiatives concerning the peace process in Colombia, with a proper consultation with the WCC member churches and the regional ecumenical organization in the region;

    b. **continue** to accompany the member churches in South Sudan and Sudan, in their efforts to prevent the escalation of violence;

    c. **strengthen** the relationship with the new UN general secretary, and share what has been done by the WCC in promoting global justice and peace, especially in relation to the sustainable development goals (SDGs);

    d. **give attention to** all regions where churches are struggling with regard to interfaith relations, especially between Christians and Muslims;

    e. **affirm** the effort of the Reference Group on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in encouraging contextual interpretation of the pilgrimage of justice and peace by WCC member churches and their theological institutions, especially among youth and women;

Discussion

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima suggested adding "WCC", so that it reads as "WCC member churches". This change was accepted.

    f. **enhance** the sharing of information about the programmatic work of the WCC to the constituencies;

    g. **include** an update on the recommendations from the report of the Gender Advisory Group (CC 2016, Trondheim, GEN PRO 04) at the next meeting of the executive committee in June 2017.

6.3.2 PROGRAMME PLANS 2017 SUMMARY (DOC. NO. 06.1)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee**:**

1. **receive** the Programme Plans 2017 Summary with appreciation;

Discussion

Dr Quawas asked how we can approve the plans without the input of the programme sub-committee. Rev. Dr Watkins shared that after long discussions and after answering several questions, the sub-committee agreed to recommend the approval of the programme plans.

Rev. Dr Tveit clarified that we should delete the word "summary", because we need to approve the plans and not just their summary. These proposed changes were accepted.

The revised recommendation now reads:

1. **approve** the Programme Plans 2017 with appreciation;

2. **request** the general secretary to:

    a. **work toward** a balanced budget, including through additional fund raising where projected activity costs exceed the available funds;

    b. **ensure** that in budget planning and presentation, the actual projected activity costs are presented, so as to identify gaps between projected costs and available funds;

Discussion

Rev. Dr Gardner, speaking from the perspective of the finance sub-committee, asked for further clarification about what is meant by "the gaps projected".

Rev. Dr Watkins shared that they saw budgeted amounts within the limits of available funds. For example, a particular project might have allocated 10,000 CHF. To fulfil that project, the cost might be far greater than 10,000 CHF. And so, to have a better understanding, they would like to know what staff will need in hand to be able to implement that project properly. They understand that the money may come through additional fundraising, through partnership with other churches, in negotiation with other projects within the WCC, and so on. They wanted to know what is available and what it would take to fulfil the project as proposed.

It was noted that with this clarification, the recommendation is clearer now. No changes were needed, and the executive committee moved onto the next recommendation.

    c. **bring** to the executive committee a plan, including budget and personnel implications, whenever a new priority is proposed;

Discussion

Dr Quawas noted that this recommendation is vague, because priorities are put through the governing bodies. The priorities were already established through the assembly and through the last central committee in June 2016. Here, new priorities are proposed. He also asked whether the general secretary is responsible for the implementation of programmes; or, if it is the general secretary along with the associate general secretaries.

Rev. Dr Tveit clarified that the general secretary is responsible for presenting plans, budgets, and reports on behalf of the whole staff. So, when it says general secretary in the text, it means the staff involved in the work.

Rev. Dr Watkins noted that this is a matter of accountability and a way of us dealing with it as governance. If, in the midst of all the priorities we have already set, we get excited about a new project, then we should consider the consequences. There would be new personnel allocations and other changes. It is not so much for the general secretary but rather for us as the executive committee to be accountable.

Rev. Dr Tveit suggested the wording: "whenever a new project or activity is proposed".

Rev. Dr Gardner noted that the budget has a contingency for emergency activities that are not forecasted or planned for. He wondered if this is already included in the accounting.

Prof. Dr Phiri offered an example. At the last central committee meeting, a decision was made that racism would become a priority. Therefore, when we went back to the programme plans, we included it in the budget for 2017 but then it meant that we had to cut down money from other projects to be able to add extra money for racism. There is no extra money, so we had to decrease money from other projects to make it possible. This is why the distributions are different than they were before.

Dr Quawas said that if a minimal budget is assigned to a project, then we are not fulfilling the desire of the central committee to carry out the priority. The objection is not specific to "c", but perhaps we need to mention something about the priorities decided by the governing bodies.

Dr Nduna noted that instead of saying "bring to the executive a plan", it should be "bring to the executive a revised plan and revised budget". This might include new proposals.

The revised recommendation "c" now reads as follows:

c. **bring** to the executive committee a revised plan, including revised budget and personnel implications, whenever a new project or activity is proposed;

d. **continue to evaluate** regularly priority-setting in planning and implementing the Council's programmes;

e. **consult** and **involve** the related member churches and REOs in planning and implementing the programmes; identify the relevant initiatives that have been undertaken by member churches, REOs and other ecumenical partners when the WCC launches a new initiative, in order to enhance ecumenical collaboration.

Discussion

Dr Quawas shared that taking into consideration the priorities set by the central committee, he felt that the issue of statelessness was not followed up on adequately. This issue was identified as critical at the CCIA meeting in Albania (2010). There was a public issues statement the Busan assembly (2013) and the issue was also raised at the central committee in Trondheim (2016). He was not sure of what activities will help to promote this priority, but he did observe that the activities are minimal, and so the priority is not well implemented.

Rev. Dr Tveit suggested the following addition: “a request to the general secretary to work towards an implementation of the priority for work on stateless people”. This would be a new “d”.

This new recommendation was approved by consensus and would read as follows:

d. **ask** the general secretary to work towards the implementation of the priority for work for stateless people:

Prof. Dr Phiri expressed a concern. She noted that all of the issues that were brought in the plan were approved by the central committee as priorities. For WCC to now lift one issue as a priority over the other priorities becomes a problem because all of the programmes have all been approved as priority areas.

6.3.3 FOLLOW UP FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROGRAMMATIC WORK (DOC. NO. 07)

The programme sub-committee recommends to the executive committee to **receive with appreciation** the update on follow up to the central committee’s recommendations on programmatic work (Doc. No. 07) with the following comments:

1. *On Religion and Violence* (CC 2016, Trondheim, GEN PRO 07)
   The programme sub-committee noted that the WCC central committee adopted a statement on Religion and Violence (Gen PUB 05.04) at its meeting in Trondheim in June 2016. Therefore, GEN PRO 07 (CC 2016, Trondheim) revised by the reference group in October 2016 should not be viewed as policy document for adoption, but as a resource for study and response. As such, the document requires a thorough revision, including a wider and more inclusive perspective on many of the issues and a more accessible style for the churches.

The programme sub-committee **recommends** that the executive committee ask the general secretary to:

take new initiatives for the revision of the document (GEN PRO 07) involving the reference group on interreligious dialogue and cooperation in a more substantial way and with a clearer scope. The progress report should be brought to the executive committee in June 2017.

2. *Follow up for the Recommendations on Programmatic Work – EAPPI Update* (Doc. No. 07.1)
   With respect to 7.1-2.c., the programme sub-committee noted that the WCC already has an established policy clearly affirming non-violent economic measures in response to the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories, which was reiterated in the Statement on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Peace Process (GEN PUB 05.09), adopted by the central committee in June 2016. In that statement WCC member churches were called on, among other things, to promote and support “all non-violent efforts to end the occupation (including considering appropriate economic and other measures).”

Discussion

Dr Quawas shared that here Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) is not specifically named, whereas before, BDS was mentioned with reference to the illegal settlements. The general secretary responded

that as an acronym has never been used in WCC policy documents. It should not be used now in this report.

Dr Quawas shared that in his memory, BDS was used by the WCC. He had attended workshops on this matter. He also recalled an initiative of the WCC and member churches. As a result, some churches took decisions at their assemblies about BDS. He clarified that he was not speaking about BDS of Israel. He was rather speaking of BDS on the illegal occupied territories.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that there may have been events on BDS. His recommendation was that we can talk about the issues but we do not use the acronym BDS, because it had become something different that went out of our control. He also drew attention to the fact that the document was offering a comment, and not a recommendation.

Dr Abuom noted that there have been discussions about BDS, but at the June 2016 central committee meeting, BDS was not used. Also, BDS has gained its own life momentum and it is out of our control. The comment made by the programme committee is saying the same thing but in WCC's own language. Rev. Dr Watkins affirmed that in 7.1.2c there was a recommendation that WCC distance itself from BDS. But the programme sub-committee reminded us that we have a history of addressing economic non-violent strategies. So we re-iterated this using our own language. It was our way to speak to this using our own language that uses this strategy in general.

Dr Quawas shared that if we read the evaluation report of the EAPPI, the security advisor is recommending that we have to move away from the BDS issue for reasons of security. However WCC cannot leave member churches who have already decided about divestment. WCC should use the same terminology as member churches that have put themselves in a very difficult position by using BDS. If "BDS" is too difficult to use then at least name divestment at least, and not to change previously used terminology to "appropriate economic measures".

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that there is not a disagreement about the content. It is important to be consistent in addressing issues, even if a consultant such as the security advisor says different. Using the term BDS now, is to use the name for a movement that has many different actors and is not necessarily the same with the movement represented by the WCC. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding, it would be better to use other language as we talk about this.

The general secretary underlined that, ultimately, this could be a policy issue; it could require more than a quick discussion. We should probably prepare documents and discuss it more fully at the next executive committee meeting.

Rev. Dr Watkins noted that further conversations will take place with people on the ground about EAPPI. These can be opportunities to address this and other issues. Knowing that this is an important issue, we will need to consider if we can find ways of addressing it more fully in the future.

Dr Quawas asked that we name divestment specifically for the sake of the churches who have already taken a decision on this.

Prof. Dr Phiri reminded the group of the context in which this conversation is taking place. This year has been difficult for EAPPI. In the media, they have been connecting the work of EAPPI with BDS in order

to expel EAPPI workers from the region. The advice was to not connect the two at the moment, because it would risk EAPPI accompaniers being expelled.

Rev. Dr Tveit reiterated a more elaborate paper should be prepared for the next executive committee meeting. We need to go deeper into this and discuss it more fully at our next meeting. The matter deserves more than this brief discussion as it may become a matter of policy.

Dr Quawas observed that the difficulties we had faced were not related to EAPPI and BDS. They had rather to do with the issue of water. He agreed that we should bring the matter to the next meeting of the executive committee, particularly for the sake of member churches who have already taken decisions on this. He puts his reservation on the table about the current recommendation which does not mention divestment specifically.

6.3.4 PILGRIMAGE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE UPDATE (DOC. NO. 08)

The programme sub-committee recommends to the executive committee to:

1. **receive** with appreciation the *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Update* (Doc. No. 08)

2. **affirm** the following plans:

    a. **send** the booklet on 'Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace' to the churches for further study and implementation as contained in the October 2016 Pilgrimage Update;

Discussion

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima asked that we add "WCC member churches" to the recommendation.

The revised recommendation now reads:

    b. **send** the booklet on 'Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace' to the WCC member churches for further study and implementation as contained in the October 2016 Pilgrimage Update;

    c. **initiate** a series of "pilgrim-teams of justice and peace" as found in the guideline for pilgrim-teams of justice and peace;

    d. **affirm** the theme for the 2018 pilgrimage of justice and peace, namely: Ecumenical Diakonia and Sustainable Development, as outlined in the document *Back To Back WCC Executive Committee Meeting and ACT Alliance Assembly October/November 2018* (Doc. No. 14);

    e. **discuss and propose** the regional focus for 2018, and identify criteria by which future regional focuses may be determined, at the meeting of the reference group on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in February 2017.

6.3.5 WCC-ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY ALLIANCE (EAA) UPDATE (DOC. NO. 09)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee**:**

1. **affirm** the general direction of the integration plan of WCC-EAA;

2. **acknowledge** the process of integration and appreciate the stakeholders' involvement;

3. **request** the general secretary to initiate a special evaluation of the integration of WCC-EAA in 2017.

6.3.6 UPDATE ON THE ECUMENICAL DIAKONIA DOCUMENT (DOC. NO. 10)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee **affirm** the general direction of the Ecumenical Diakonia Study Document, with a suggestion to increase the participation of the Orthodox churches in the membership of the working group.

Discussion

Metropolitan Gennadios suggested that we expand this, to include the two families: we should add "the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches".

The revised recommendation now reads:

> The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee **affirm** the general direction of the Ecumenical Diakonia Study Document, with a suggestion to increase the participation of the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental churches in the membership of the working group.

6.3.7 EVALUATION OF THE ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAMME IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL (EAPPI) (DOC. NOS. 11, 11.1, AND 12)

This includes the following documents:

- *WCC-EAPPI Evaluation – Process and Timeline* (Doc. No 11)
- *Management Response to the Evaluation of the WCC- EAPPI* (Doc. No. 11.1)
- *Final Report: Evaluation of the WCC-EAPPI* (Doc. No. 12)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

receive the *Final Report of the Evaluation of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel* and **affirm** the general direction of the *Management Response to the Evaluation for the WCC – EAPPI*, November 2016, with the following observations:

1. **continue** the integration process of WCC-EAPPI into the overall programme of WCC as one of the Ecumenical Initiatives;

Discussion

Dr Quawas asked what is meant by "integration process". EAPPI had always been a WCC programme, so we do not need to "integrate" it.

Rev. Dr Tveit understands what the report meant, but still thinks that we rephrase this to be: "re-affirm the WCC-EAPPI as a WCC initiative".

The revised recommendation now reads as:

1. **re-affirm** the WCC-EAPPI as a WCC initiative;

2. **enhance** collaboration and **foster** mutual dialogue with the church leaders in Jerusalem;

3. **present** a long-term action plan (2018-2021) to the WCC executive committee meeting in June 2017 for further discussion and approval.

Discussion

Dr Quawas asked why the long-term plans are starting with 2018 and not 2017. Rev. Dr Watkins noted that these plans could start in 2017.

The revised recommendation now reads as:

3. **present** a long term action plan (2017-2021) to the WCC executive committee meeting in June 2017 for further discussion and approval.

6.3.8 UPDATE ON "PRINCIPLES AND TOOLS FOR CHILD-FRIENDLY CHURCHES" (DOC. NO. 13)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee**:**

1. **affirms** the Busan Assembly commitment (EC 19 Report) to address the issue of children as an integral part of the ecumenical commitment to the pilgrimage of justice and peace;

2. **receives** the revised document "Churches' Commitments to Children" as an expression of this wider ecumenical commitment, with appreciation for the extensive revision work done since the central committee meeting in June 2016; noting that this document is understood as an open invitation to the WCC member churches and partners, and a living resource which will be further elaborated and developed over time in light of member churches' responses and experience;

Discussion

Rev. Dr Tveit asked if we could add "will be further edited, elaborated, and developed" in the second recommendation. He noted that there were helpful comments about editing that came from member churches.

The revised recommendation 2 now reads as:

1. **receives** the revised document "Churches' Commitments to Children" as an expression of this wider ecumenical commitment, with appreciation for the extensive revision work done since the central committee meeting in June 2016; noting that this document is understood as an open invitation to the WCC member churches and partners, and a living resource which needs to be further edited, and later elaborated and developed over time in light of member churches' responses and experience;

2. **encourages** the general secretary to proceed with appropriate follow up, dissemination and reception of responses and experience from member churches and ecumenical partners according to the spirit of the Busan Assembly;

3. **acknowledges** with gratitude the relationship between WCC and UNICEF as an approach for implementing this programme, where it is found useful for and by the churches.

Discussion

Mrs Nelyubova asked if recommendations 2 and 4 could be brought into harmony. Perhaps it should be said that this is not only an invitation but also a project. Also, the document could be used as a basis for WCC programmes. Rev. Dr Tveit suggested that "as an approach for implementing this programme "church's commitment to children" could be added. In this case, we would name the programme.

Mr Prove shared that the broader ecumenical commitment is to place children in a central place in the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP). But this specific document and its follow up is a programmatic expression of that broader ecumenical commitment.

Mrs Nelyubova shared that we are missing an important step between what happened at the Busan assembly and what is being named here. Churches need to commit themselves to the children. This has not happened yet. The document has not gone out yet. Churches are not yet called to do this. What we have so far is an initiative of Busan assembly, and then initiative from UNICEF.

Rev. Dr Watkins reflected that her understanding is that in recommendations 2 and 3 is that we are issuing the invitation. And then in recommendation 4 it is an expression of that particular programme. The programme is one opportunity to becoming involved in the broader initiative.

Mrs Nelyubova said that "programme" does not need to be added to recommendation number 2. She also revised document, as it is, cannot be received. The document in its current form needs a severe revision. There are very misleading and unprofessional notes used in the document and that it cannot go out in its current form.

Rev. Dr Watkins shared that this is the purpose so that we can say it will be a living document that will be further edited. This additional word helps in this.

Mrs Nelyubova shared that we need to look at the last 2 lines of recommendation 2. As it stands, it seems that the document will be sent to member churches and then they will comment on it. But first we need to revise the document before it goes to them.

Rev. Dr Tveit proposed the wording: “as a living resource, which needs to be further edited, and later elaborated over time…”, to be added to recommendation 2.

In response to a question, the general secretary clarified that the fact that many member churches are already working with children in this way, this will be noted in the letter that he will send out to it.

Prof. Dr Phiri wanted to bring attention to “where it is found useful for and by the churches”. This statement acknowledges that churches have their own programmes, but only those who think it is useful will use this.

Also, the relationship between WCC and UNICEF was already approved in the central committee meeting of 2014. She wondered if we should add that information into 4.

The revised recommendation now reads as:

1. **acknowledges** with gratitude the relationship between WCC and UNICEF as an approach for implementing this programme “Churches’ Commitments to Children”, where it is found useful for and by the churches;

2. **requests** the general secretary to present a progress report on this issue in the executive committee meeting June 2017.

6.3.9 Back To Back WCC Executive Committee Meeting and ACT Alliance Assembly October/November 2018 (Doc. No. 14)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee**:**

1. **receive** with appreciation the document *Back To Back WCC Executive Committee Meeting and ACT Alliance Assembly October/November 2018* (Doc. No. 14);

2. **approve** the general direction as presented;

3. **request** the general secretary to explore concrete ways for implementation of the proposal.

Discussion

Dr Nduna suggested to add “and finalize” to recommendation 3, so that it reads as “explore and finalize”.

The revised recommendation now reads as:

3. **request** the general secretary to explore and finalize concrete ways for implementation of the proposal.

6.3.10 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE AND STRATEGY (DOC. NO. 15)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee **accept** the Communication Update and Strategy, with the following suggestions:

1. **adjust** the language in WCC communications related to the churches' commitments to children;

2. **use** inclusive and pastoral language in any communication with member churches and ecumenical partners, for instance on annual contributions, or sensitive social and/or political issues faced by member churches and ecumenical partners;

Discussion

Metropolitan Gennadios suggested adding "to continue to use inclusive and pastoral language…". The naming of "continue" is important; otherwise, it implies that the WCC has not been using this language yet.

The revised recommendation now reads as:

3. **continue** to use inclusive and pastoral language in any communication with WCC member churches and ecumenical partners, for instance on annual contributions, or sensitive social and/or political issues faced by member churches and ecumenical partners;

4. **ensure** that general communication to member churches be copied to members of the central committee.

<u>The report of the programme sub-committee as a whole was approved by consensus.</u>

Mrs Nelyubova shared that, next time, it would be helpful to have a joint session with the programme sub-committee and the finance sub-committee. Some of the discussion of budget would go smoother if there had been a joint session together.

Metropolitan Gennadios invited the executive committee to have a moment of silence and to give thanks for all of the work that has been done. H.E. Archbishop Dr Aykazian offered a prayer to close the session.

7. Public Issues

7.1 FIRST PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC ISSUES

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a <u>hearing session.</u> He invited Mr Peter Prove to speak about public issues.

Mr Prove encouraged the executive committee to read the document about actions on public issues which were reported since the last meeting of the central committee (22-28 June, 2016, Trondheim, Norway). He noted that the public issues sub-committee will consider this at their meeting.

Mr Prove also shared that there is a draft Minute on Climate Justice which will be considered at this executive committee meeting. Currently, the 22nd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22) is coming to an end in Marrakech, Morocco. The meeting was taking place from 7-18 November. The recent presidential election in the United States has posed a challenge to progress on climate change because the President-Elect has proposed to withdraw the United States from agreements made in Paris at COP21 in 2015.

7.2 ACTION ON THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ISSUES SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr Abuom moderated a decision session.

She invited Dr Quawas to present the report.

7.2.1 DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY (DOC. NO. 01)

The public issues sub-committee discussed the *Report of the General Secretary* (Doc. No. 01), focussing especially on the general secretary's remarks concerning the significance of this meeting of the executive committee in China and the role of the China Christian Council.

7.2.2 ACTIONS ON PUBLIC ISSUES (DOC. NO. 22)

The public issues sub-committee reviewed and discussed the summary of *Actions on Public Issues* (Doc. No. 22) and refers it to the executive committee for information.

It was suggested that in future it would be relevant to include in such summaries, reference to meetings of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), including of the CCIA Core Group.

7.2.3 STATEMENT ON CLIMATE JUSTICE (DOC. NO. 23)

Taking earlier discussion in the executive committee plenary into account, the public issues sub-committee prepared a revised draft text (Doc. No. 23 rev) for a statement, rather than a minute, and refers it to the executive committee for action.

The executive committee accepted the report of the public issues sub-committee.

Discussion

Dr Quawas read the draft statement. The executive committee received comments on the statement and discussed it at length. Several changes were proposed and accepted.

The approved statement was amended to include these two changes (full text of the finalized statement is in Appendix V).

7.2.4 LETTER TO THE CHINA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL AND THE THREE-SELF PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT

Drawing on comments included in the report of the general secretary, the public issues sub-committee prepared a draft letter to the China Christian Council and the Three Self Patriotic Movement (Doc. No. PUB 02), and refers it to the executive committee for action.

The executive committee offered comments on the draft letter.

The letter as a whole was accepted (full text of the letter is in Appendix VI).

8. Staffing, Personnel, and Nominations

8.1 FIRST PRESENTATION ON STAFFING, PERSONNEL, AND NOMINATIONS

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session.

8.1.1 NOMINATIONS

She invited Mr Lemopoulos to share the list of names of people who were nominated for positions on committees.

Rev. Dr Tveit made a proposal in addition to the suggested list. He noted that the steering committee for the building project had a meeting when the central committee met in Trondheim this past June, and at that point, Rev. Dr Paul Gardner was present representing the executive committee. He also shared that at this current executive meeting, it is difficult to secure the participation of the members on that steering committee. He recommended that Rev. Dr Gardner also be appointed to be part of the steering committee so that there is higher participation in that committee. This recommendation will be forwarded to the nominations sub-committee for consideration.

Mr Lemopoulos asked if it would be possible for Rev. Dr Gardner to attend a steering committee meeting at this meeting of the executive; the steering committee meeting will take place before the final nominations report and before the membership on committees is approved.

Dr Quawas made an observation. He noted that it generally seems that, at the WCC assembly, some churches proposed youth or women to take seats on the central committee or executive committee. After they were named, several people resigned; however, their substitutes were not always from those same categories. In these substitutes, the executive committee needs to insist with the churches that if they want to change, then it must be the same category as the one who was elected from the assembly. His proposal is that while the church has the right to make the substitute, these need to be from the same category. A person with a disability must be replaced with a person with a disability. Youth must be replaced with youth. A woman must be replaced with another woman. He would like this to be discussed in the nominations sub-committee.

Mr Lemopoulos shared that when there is a vacancy and WCC writes to the church, we always remind of the constitutional provisions. When we receive a response, we negotiate as much as we can, but if

member churches insist on a particular replacement then, as secretariat, take their recommendation to the governing body. In some cases, there might be some flexibility. For example, in one case, a young person was replaced by a woman; both of these categories are underrepresented. But if a young woman is replaced by an older man, then this is a problem.

Dr Abuom asked about the replacement for the Most Rev Dr S. Tilewa Johnson (M/O) from the Church of the Province of West Africa who had passed away. What contacts have we had with the church? Mr Lemopoulos shared that we asked the representatives from West Africa, but still do not have a response. Dr Abuom shared that there is a new archbishop who might be a consideration.

The document and comments will be forwarded to the nominations sub-committee.

8.1.2 GOVERNANCE: APPLICATION OF THE POSTAL OR ELECTRONIC VOTE

Mr Lemopoulos was invited to offer a report.

He noted that the executive committee is invited to amend and approve the section on the "***Application of the postal or electronic vote***" and forward the document to the central committee for inclusion in the Supplement to the WCC Rules.

Rule XVIII – Legal Provisions

9. Decisions that can be taken by vote according to rule XIX can also be taken by postal or electronic vote provided that (1) information upon which the decision could be taken has been provided, (2) a notice period has been provided of at least forty-five days between the date of the notice of the vote and due date for the response, and (3) the thresholds for approval indicated in rule XIX are reached by votes cast as against the possible number of votes that could be cast in response to the postal request. The election of a general secretary shall not take place by postal vote. A copy of the communication shall be sent by post and electronically.

<u>Review of authority for governance and decision-making</u>

Normally, decision-making takes place face to face, a context that privileges discussion and forming a common mind. While most matters for decision by the WCC and its governing bodies must be decided using consensus process, some matters can be decided by vote. The WCC Rules provide a mechanism for meeting the requirements of recording a decision through postal or electronic means for matters that can be decided by vote (Rule XIX).

Matters reserved for vote include constitutional changes (assembly), elections, selection of assembly venue (central committee) and "adoption of yearly accounts, financial audit reports and appointment of the auditors." Additionally, matters that have been moved from consensus to voting procedures, following employment of consensus procedures, can be decided by vote.[1]

[1] The only occasion in which it could be envisioned that a postal or electronic vote could be employed for a matter that requires a consensus of the central committee would be a case in which the central committee itself, having followed consensus process, moves the matter to voting procedure, and then itself defers the matter to a later postal or electronic vote.

In between biennial meetings of the central committee, governance authority and responsibility is delegated by Rule VIII to the executive committee. *"The executive committee shall be entrusted with and made accountable for specific governance authority and responsibility of the World Council of Churches as delegated by the central committee, with authority to establish limits and guidelines within which management and staff of the Council shall implement the policies and programmes of the Council."*

Rule VIII itself provides that "*The executive committee may delegate to the leadership of the finance sub-committee, composed of the moderator and two additional sub-committee members, the authority to authorise and approve for issue the financial statements. The leadership of the finance sub-committee may act on financial matters as specifically authorised by the executive committee between meetings, reporting back to the executive committee*."

Thus, all levels of governance privilege decision-making by consensus process, with only few exceptions. Decision-making about WCC governance takes place at the assembly level during the assembly, at the central committee level during the central committee meetings, and, in between meetings of the central committee, by the executive committee. Additional provisions provide for delegation, in between meetings of the executive committee, to its sub-committees, when designated by the executive committee.

Management decisions that do not require participation of the governing bodies remain at all times within the authority and responsibility of the general secretary (Rule XI).

Application of the postal and electronic vote rule

In between meetings of the central committee, a governance matter that, in the considered judgment of the executive committee, is time-sensitive, urgent and important, and relates to a matter that must be decided by vote, has not been delegated to the executive committee and cannot be decided by the executive committee, could be proposed by the executive committee for decision by the members of the central committee through postal or electronic vote.

In between meetings of the executive committee, a governance matter that, in the considered judgment of the general secretary, is time-sensitive, urgent and important and cannot be deferred to the next scheduled meeting of the executive committee or a special meeting of the executive committee,[2] relates to matters that can be decided by vote and has not been delegated by the executive committee to the leadership of a sub-committee, could be proposed by the leadership of the central committee for decision by the executive committee through postal or electronic vote.

The general secretary shall manage the preparation, dissemination and receipt of returned votes in accordance with Rule XVIII.9 and shall report to the relevant governing body the results of the postal and electronic vote.

Following the report, the executive committee was invited to make comments.

Dr Quawas shared that he did not like the introduction to the report. The issue we had faced with the general secretary's proposal for the use of funds was about who has the right to start the process asking for an electronic vote. Does the general secretary have this right, or must it come through a sub-

[2] Rule XVIII.8 provides for teleconference meetings.

committee of the executive committee according to the issue to be dealt with? The supplement to the rules is not clear on this matter, and needs clarification.

Dr Quawas then referred to the Rules of the WCC, and read aloud from Rule XVIII (Legal provisions), paragraph 9. He reflected that when the governance group agreed to add the electronic voting, it had in mind only decisions that would be taken by consensus and not by vote. Therefore this risks changing the whole concept of the rules.

Rev. Robina Winbush agreed with Dr Quawas, but asked for an example where an electronic vote would be most expedient and helpful.

Mr Lemopoulos shared that there was a financial issue that needed to be taken, and the general secretary invited a postal vote. The use of a postal vote was not challenged but rather the way it was initiated.

Dr Quawas said the executive committee should authorize the general secretary to initiate such an action.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that firstly, it is very important to clarify that this is not a discussion proposed by him in order to expand the authority of the general secretary; rather it is to clarify our rules among ourselves. Secondly, it is only a discussion about how a decision can be made when we are not in meetings, and there is a need defined by the executive committee or by the leadership that cannot wait until the next meeting. This is the context of this discussion. It is not about removing crucial tasks from the central or executive committee and making decisions on them by postal vote.

Ms Dykes commented that when the general secretary was making about adjustments to budgets, there was a decision to be made about adjustments to general reserves which are in the authority of the executive committee only, i.e. to release a balance for use. Otherwise, as Dr Quawas said, it could be left over an extended period of time; however, that may not always be practical.

Rev. Dr Gardner shared that he thinks that the conditions that would trigger an election voting process needs to be clearer, and listening to the explanation and reading the documentation, there is a gap. It was very clearly expressed verbally afterwards, but he does not believe that the written document has expressed it with the same amount of clarity. He suggested that we need to look again at the conditions that would trigger an electronic voting process and how this process is carried out.

Mr Lemopoulos offered a matter of clarification. The very first line in the document states that the executive committee is invited to amend and approve the process for postal or electronic vote when needed. This is what we are discussing and this is what is meant to be included in the supplement of the rules. It is clearly said that if, in between meetings, there is an urgent decision that needs to be taken, then the leadership can propose to the executive committee or the executive committee can propose to the central committee to have a postal vote. This was a response to the fundamental questions raised by Dr Quawas in the previous meeting.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that part of the conversation earlier was based on a misunderstanding. It is not about changing the rules; rather it is about how we apply the rules. It is also about the procedures when such a postal vote is initiated. At the moment there is no disagreement, it is more a question of whether we have described it clearly enough.

The staffing and nominations sub-committee will look at this again.

8.1.3 ASSEMBLY PREPARATIONS: A PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Lemopoulos presented the report. In its meeting in Trondheim (June 2016), the central committee launched the process of the assembly preparation by:

a) inviting member churches to indicate their willingness to host the next assembly,
b) appointing an Assembly Planning Committee, and
c) appointing an Assembly Worship Planning Committee.

The central committee instructed the general secretary to request that any member church interested in hosting the 11th assembly announce interest by November 2016 so that a progress report be presented to the executive committee meeting and an assessment of venues be completed in 2017 and reported to the central committee in 2018 for action.

Two responses were received so far:

a) From **EKD**. The Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) discussed the possibility of inviting the WCC for the 11th assembly to Germany. They decided to extend an invitation as the EKD feels a strong attachment to the work of the WCC and would like to support the ecumenical movement in this world as well as the idea of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

b) From **CTBI**. The Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is preparing the ground for churches to be able to take a decision. They put together a document for the churches. They will be having meetings in order for the churches to affirm their desire to continue a process of putting together a bid to host the event in Glasgow in 2021.

The executive committee is invited to assess these two responses and instruct the general secretary about the next steps. Answering some of the following questions might help the process advance:

- Should we move ahead with these two invitations?
- Should member churches and ecumenical partners be reminded of the initial invitation (and a new deadline be given)?
- Should a more pro-active attitude be adopted and member churches and/or ecumenical partners be encouraged to consider hosting the next assembly (if yes are there any regional and/or confessional contexts to be particularly explored)?

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima shared that the letter would have been sent to churches after the central committee meeting in June. It was likely that church offices were closed during the summer for holidays. The deadline that was given was very short. He asked if it would be possible to extend the deadlines and if the decision could be made at the next meeting of the executive committee.

In terms of the responses received, he shared that there is really only one official invitation so far, from Germany. Further, he reflected, we need to consider the geographic region. He wants us to consider the past few assemblies: Africa (1998), Latin America (2006), and then Asia (2013). With this in mind, the Middle East, Europe, the Pacific, or the Caribbean might be possible considerations. It was later noted that the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation was in Jamaica in 2011, and so there had been a major WCC international meeting in the Caribbean region relatively recently.

Dr Quawas noted that the letter went to all member churches and there were only two responses from this. If the deadline were to be extended, it might give a bad impression to those who have already responded. He asked that this issue be considered.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that it is important that this is considered thoroughly and not in. It is vital for the WCC that some churches are willing to take responsibility to host the assembly. We need to express our gratitude for those who have already responded and acknowledge both as very serious commitments to the WCC. In both conversations with those who have responded, they want to express that they want to take more responsibility for the WCC. This is not an effort , like for the Olympic games, where they show how great they are as a region; but instead, they really want to support the WCC. He does not see that they would be hurt if we reminded our churches and give them some more months to reflect on this. We want to make sure that the invitation is really received. The churches could be asked to reflect on this until February. Then, the leadership of the central committee could consider the responses and bring updated information to the next executive committee meeting.

Mr Lemopoulos observed that it is not so much a matter of when the letter was sent; it is more a matter of cycles. Some churches may not have had a big meeting between June and November of this year to make such a significant decision. His guess is that when we write to member churches, we should recognize that there are already churches who have responded. We should recognize the commitment of those churches, but also consider how the final decision could be taken.

Rev. Robina Winbush wondered if there is any thought being given to the benefit of the assembly being in a particular context. For example, going to Busan in 2013 was meeting the needs of the WCC in terms of the broader possibility of being in a place where Christianity was not a majority, and so on. Are there particular regions where it would be useful for the assembly to be held as part of our context, and in our ability to host? Dr Abuom noted that this is a good question and it is captured on our document.

Dr Quawas shared that unfortunately member churches in some regions cannot fulfil the responsibility of hosting an assembly because of economic reasons. If we can consider how churches can support the assembly without having to offer financial support, then Jordan would be a possibility. His church could not support the high cost of such event, but would be happy to host the assembly.

Dr Abuom noted that the staffing and nominations sub-committee will discuss this further.

8.1.4 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session.

Mr Lemopoulos was invited to speak about membership matters.

1. New Member Churches

A. The WCC central committee gathered from 22-28 June 2016 decided to admit three churches as full member churches:

- Dutch Reformed Church (readmission)
- Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India

- Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Blantyre Synod

After this decision, necessary actions have been taken for fully integrating these churches into the WCC fellowship with all rights and obligations of a WCC member church.

B. The central committee also decided to accept applications for membership from two churches that participate in the work of the WCC and interact with the local fellowship of member churches, for an interim period, until the next central committee in 2018, according to WCC rules:

- The Africa Brotherhood Church
- Baptist Community in Central Africa

After this decision necessary actions have been taken for establishing permanent contact with these churches in order to include them in the programmatic work of the WCC with the purpose of offering them the possibility to get to know the WCC fellowship more closely.

2. Suspension of the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu from WCC fellowship

For the first time in the WCC history, WCC central committee decided, according to the WCC constitution and rules (amended by the 10th assembly in Busan) to suspend the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu from WCC fellowship.

A letter signed by the WCC general secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, properly informed the leadership of the Kimbanguist Church, offering details about the reasons that lead to this decision but also about the process followed in order to take such a decision. It was emphasized that suspension does not mean exclusion, but rather it enforces a coherent process of dialogue with them as a suspended member church.

In a letter to the general secretary, the leadership of the Kimbanguist Church announced that a delegation was to visit Geneva in October but that their trip was cancelled because of visa problems. There was no mention of the subject of their visit, though the letter was copied to the ecumenical partners and members of the WCC central committee who had accompanied and/or participated in the decision making process.

At the initiative of the general secretariat a process of internal discernment and analysis was launched among staff in order to propose a code of conduct regarding the details of relationships between WCC and a suspended member church. The first conclusion of this process shall be shared with the next meeting of the executive committee as well as with the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration. The final goal of this process is to formulate supplements to the rules on matter of suspended WCC members to be presented to the central committee for final approval.

3. Change of name of a member church

Due to change in membership within the Mennonite Church in Germany, the request is made that the name of the member church be changed from "**Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden**" (one of the founding members of the WCC, recorded in the list of member churches, in English, as "The Mennonite Church in Germany") into **"Association of Mennonite Congregations in Germany"** (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland).

In 1990, different Mennonite conferences in Germany merged and formed a new Association of Mennonite Congregations in Germany, the “Vereignung” being one of them. The question of membership in the WCC had been one of the issues discussed during the time of the merger. Since consensus could not be reached, it was agreed that the “Vereignung” could keep its membership in the WCC, thus allowing the majority of the Mennonite congregations to be represented at the WCC.

At the annual assembly, in June 2016, a decision was taken by consensus that the “Association of Mennonite Congregations in Germany” could now join the WCC membership, mainly as a result of the “Decade to Overcome Violence” and the new start of the “Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace”.

4. Application of the Amity Foundation to be recognized as an International Ecumenical Organization in working relationship with the WCC

A formal letter promised by Ms Theresa Carino, Director of International Liaison Office (Geneva), Amity Foundation, addressed WCC general secretary, requesting recognition as an international ecumenical organization in working relationship with WCC is expected from the Amity Foundation.The executive committee was invited to make comments or ask questions about the report.

Dr Quawas asked about if the Amity Foundation is an international organization. He does not have a problem with the Amity Foundation. If it was an international organization, it would be no problem from his perspective.

Mr Lemopoulos noted that constitutionally there is in the WCC rules a provision for working relationships with a number of ecumenical organizations under the heading of “international ecumenical organizations” (IEOs). This is in addition to Christian world communions (CWCs), regional ecumenical organizations (REOs), national councils of churches (NCCs) and specialized ministries. Initially, the category of international ecumenical organizations was for organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA but later other ecumenical organizations were also included.

Dr Quawas is concerned that we are putting in the international box something that is not international. The YMCA is an international organization. But the Amity Foundation is not. He is not discussing their working relationships with the WCC; they must be associated to the Council. His point is about what category they should be classified into.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that since he was involved in the conversation with the Amity Foundation that they have an international dimension as they have offices outside of China. He commented that we could also discuss if they are a specialized ministry. This could be part of the conversation in the sub-committee, since that is a relevant category in this case. It could also be discussed when we meet with them on Tuesday, and then we can determine the solution that is best for both parties.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Aykazian shared that he supports the idea of the Amity Foundation. But before we discuss any organization, if we want to recognize them as an international Christian organization, we should have some information in front of us so that we know what we are talking about. He shared that he does not know much about this organization, and would appreciate having background.

Rev. Dr Tveit said that the final decision will be made within the central committee, so we will have time to discuss this further at this executive meeting and also at the next executive meeting.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima pointed out that we still do not have detailed or background information about the Amity Foundation for when it goes to the sub-committee. He observed that we need a bit of history. He also questioned the idea that just because an organization has an office outside of a country that it is international. This is not necessarily true. He reflected that there must be some information about the organization when it comes to the sub-committee, and asked if someone could be invited to give background information.

Rev. Dr Tveit affirmed that that the general secretary of the Amity Foundation could come to the sub-committee when it meets to give some more background and additional information about the organization.

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo wanted to talk about the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu in Congo. She was wondering about the communication. The church was just notified that they were suspended. She was given many letters about the situation. The church said that they sent information to the WCC but there was no response. They said that they can send the letter both by post or by email. Secondly, this church has a good relationship with other churches in the region. They are members of ecumenical bodies in Congo. The problem is their theology. This is why they were asking if the decision could be reconsidered. This is why they want to come to Geneva. Yet, the Schengen visa is a problem.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that WCC has never had a suspension before. After the decision, it was his duty to communicate, and also to invite them to meetings. Suspension does not mean the end of all meetings, but is rather a serious warning about the problems and what to do about them. This was in the first letter. Now, they have realized that there is a problem of communication. The purpose of the process is to have a deeper and more straightforward conversation about suspensions, and we will find a way to do this.

8.1.5 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

Mr Lemopoulos shared that the document about the Code of Conduct was prepared in response to a request from the executive committee some time ago. The Code of Conduct was to give staff guidance about how they can conduct themselves with member churches. This falls under the category of Staff Regulations, which are issued by the general secretary.

The document, once finalized, will be communicated to staff via the general secretary. But since the executive committee had asked for it, we wanted to be sure that its direction and content satisfy the executive committee. It was noted that this is not the only document guiding staff; there are several other documents that staff have to work with.

The executive committee is being asked to discuss the document and offer advice to the general secretary on the scope and content of the Code of Conduct. The recorded feedback will be considered as we move toward a final document.

Metropolitan Gennadios asked when the document will be finalized. Mr Lemopoulos shared that it depends on the decisions made at this executive committee. If the committee feels that it is ready, then it can be finalized. If more work is needed, then it will continue to be worked on.

Rev. Dr Tveit reiterated that the document is being brought to the executive committee to gather advice.

Rev. Dr Watkins asked about the proliferation of documents. If there is this document, and also Staff Rules and Regulations, and other documents; she wonders if there might be simply too many documents for staff. She understands that this is a management discussion, but raises it for consideration.

Dr Quawas asked about when the request of the executive committee was done (decision date and meeting), and would like information about the word "binding" that currently appears in the draft. Sometimes, you cannot bind in everything. The Code of Conduct offers guidelines. If one signs something that is binding, then perhaps the work could be negatively affected. It is very important to have a Code of Conduct, and it is the right of the general secretary to include issues that are important. But, to have it binding might mean that he may be restricting staff.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that this issue was raised at the central committee meeting in Trondheim this past June. It was noted that there is a process formulating more clearly what the processes are for staff as they represent the WCC on their visits. But then it was helpful to bring several issues together. This is not a new regulation; it is a reminder of existing regulations. Its purpose is a "moral" binding. The sub-committee can discuss whether "binding" is the best word in this case.

Rev. Dr Gardner asked about the extent to which staff have been a part of this process of developing and accepting this. Rev. Dr Tveit responded that the staff rules and regulations to which this refers were based on on-going conversations with staff. He shared that he wants to hear from the executive committee before it goes further.

Dr Abuom observed that part of it was around having some consistency in terms of ethos of work. It is consistent with Swiss labour laws. We need to make sure that the framework is in place to guide.

8.2 Staffing and Other Matters

Dr Abuom moderated a closed session.

She invited the general secretary to offer an update about staffing. Rev. Dr Tveit noted that they are doing well in the staff leadership group in terms of gender balance. The other statistic is that after 1 January, there are exactly the same number of women and men in programme executive positions and in the leadership of the WCC. The picture is important for us to be aware of; this might be the first time that this has happened in the history of the Council. This movement has also been deliberately supported, and this is something that we should celebrate and be proud of. We have men and women who are all very qualified for their tasks.

The general secretary then shared his updated staffing report.

I. Vacancies

- EAPPI Local Programme Coordinator, in Jerusalem
- EAPPI Communication Officer
- Programme Executive for CCIA (maternity leave cover of 6-8 months)

II. Update on appointments and extensions of contract since the last Executive Committee

- Ms Xanthi Morfi, Communication Officer, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Greece, as of 1 January 2017.

III. Arrivals

The following staff members have assumed their responsibilities:

- Dr Mohamad Khir Alwazir, programme assistant for the project on Syria, Muslim, Syria, from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017
- Dr Ani Ghazaryan, programme executive for Faith and Order, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin), Switzerland, from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020
- Ms Athena Peralta, programme executive for economic and ecological justice, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the Philippines, from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020
- Ms Catila Sequeira, receptionist, Switzerland, from 3 August 2016 (indefinite contract)
- Mr Ivars Kupcis, communication officer, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, from 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2020
- Mr Stanley Noffsinger, director of the office of the general secretariat, Church of Brethren, USA, from 1 September 2016 to 31 December 2021
- Rev. Dr Benjamin Simon, professor of ecumenical missiology – Ecumenical Institute Bossey, EKD-Evangelical Church in Baden, Germany, from 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2020
- Rev. Dr Owe Boersma, EAPPI international coordinator, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, from 26 September 2016 to 30 September 2020
- Dr Mwai Makoka, programme executive for health and healing, Reformed, Malawi, 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2020
- Ms Anjeline Okola Charles, EDAN coordinator, Religious Society of Friends: Friends United Meeting, Kenya, from 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2020
- Mr Laurent Bouquet, maintenance technician, Roman Catholic Church, Switzerland, 1 November 2016, (indefinite contract)

IV. Departures

A. The following staff members and Interns have left the services of the Council since the last executive committee meeting:

- Prof. Dr Marina Behera, professor for ecumenical missiology – Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Presbyterian Church in India, India, on 31 July 2017
- Dr Andrew Donaldson, worship consultant, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Canada, on 31 July 2017, seconded staff from General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church
- Ms Judith Frei, intern for archives, on 31 August 2017
- Mr Mutua Kobia, intern for CCIA, Methodist Church in Kenya, on 31 August 2017
- Mr Manuel Quintero, EAPPI international coordinator, Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba, Cuba, on 31 August 2016 (retirement)

- Mr Walter Winkler, maintenance technician, Salvation Army, Switzerland, on 31 August 2016
- Rev. Dr Hielke Wolters, associate general secretary, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, on 31 August 2016
- Rev. Theodore Gill, senior editor, Presbyterian Church (USA), on 30 September 2016
- Mr Gerard Scarff, conference secretary, Church of England, Switzerland, on 30 September 2016
- Ms Ginetta Di Santo, cook, Roman Catholic Church, Italy, on 31 October 2016
- Mr Samuel Kabue, EDAN consultant, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, on 31 October 2016

B. The following programme executive and leadership staff members will be leaving the services of the Council in the coming months:
   - Rev. Garland Pierce, senior assistant to the general secretary, African Methodist Episcopal Church, USA, on 30 November 2016
   - Ms Jet Den Hollander, EAPPI local programme coordinator, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, on 31 December 2016
   - Mr Georges Lemopoulos, deputy general secretary, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Turkey, on 31 January 2017
   - Mr Michael West, publisher, Roman Catholic Church, USA, on 30 June 2017

C. The following staff members will be leaving the services of the Council in the coming months:
   - Ms Roza Trpevska, housekeeper, FYROM, on 31December 2016
   - Ms Lurdes Guimaraes Teixeira, project assistant, Roman Catholic Church, Portugal, on 31 December 2016

V. Permit Issues

At the initiative of the Geneva Welcome Centre (CAGI), NGOs based in Geneva were invited to attend a meeting during which the authorities in charge of granting work permits (Office Cantonal de la Population et des Migrations) gave some explanations on the number of permits that will be granted in 2017 for the Canton of Geneva.

The main information received was the following:

- The quota of Non-European citizens permits in 2017 is
  - 133 for L permit (valid for a maximum duration of 12 months)
  - 83 for B permit (valid for up to five years)
- No quota for G permit (cross boarder workers)

As a consequence of this decision, we were informed that the Swiss authority will not provide authorisation for internships for more than four months. The Swiss authority highly recommends us to establish four months contracts for interns.

A possibility to extend the internship is to apply for a four months permit in Geneva, followed by an internship extension in another office.

There is a possibility for a non-European citizen to live in France and obtain a cross boarder worker permit (G permit) provided that the person concerned has already obtained a permanent permit and a lease contract in France. So this is not a solution for us as our staff members come directly from their country.

In other words, the message delivered was that it will become more and more difficult to be granted permits for non-European citizens. The authorities invited NGOs to offer positions mainly to European citizens.

This is a serious issue for the WCC, and we have to address it further with the Swiss authorities. The nature of our organization is that of a global fellowship, and this should be reflected in the staffing demographics of the WCC. Since this news came in the last few days, it was not possible to consult with the Lutheran World Federation and ACT Alliance who will have concerns similar to ours. Together we will have further conversations with Swiss authorities.

VI. Staff Rules and Regulations

A new set of Staff Rules and Regulations has been revised by the staff leadership group and the staff representative group as well. By common agreement, new Staff Rules and Regulations will be implemented in 2017 following the revision of the document by a legal advisor which should be made by the end of the year 2016.

Dr Abuom noted that most of this is for information. She invited comments on the report.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima shared that there are 109 staff registered. He looked at the church affiliations: about 50% are Catholic. Several did not give their church family. If they did not give their church families, then likely they do not have a church affiliation. The concern is that many people who are staff are not from member churches.

Rev. Dr Tveit noted that the majority of people who are Catholic are locally hired for administrative work and for working in the Bossey guesthouse. There are only two Catholics who work at the programme executive level.

The general secretary clarified that the other category not given is that you are not obliged as an employee to give your religious affiliation to your employer where it is not required. For example, as a cleaner, you are not required to give your religious affiliation. There are some people who did not give their church family if they are doing administrative tasks. But overall there is a high level of cooperation and respect among staff.

Rev. Robina Winbush shared that she is very grateful to hear about the gender balance in the leadership group. She also asked to hear about the geographic and confessional balances in the leadership group.

Rev. Dr Tveit stated that the following people are currently part of the staff leadership group:

- Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, Church of Norway, general secretary
- Mr Georges Lemopoulos, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Turkey/Switzerland, deputy general secretary
- Mr Stanley Noffsinger, Church of the Brethren, USA, director of the office of the general Secretariat

- Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa, Malawi, public witness and diakonia, associate general secretary
- Fr. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, Romanian Orthodox Church, Romania/Switzerland, ecumenical formation, associate general secretary / director of the Ecumenical Institute
- Ms Elaine Dykes, Church of Scotland, United Kingdom/Switzerland, finance, director
- Ms Marianne Ejdersten, Church of Sweden, Sweden, communications, director

Ms Winbush asked if we might have more geographic balance. Rev. Dr Tveit noted that we are doing well in terms of gender balance, but we need to do more in terms of having more voices from the global south. There is a strong Lutheran and Reformed participation on the leadership team. Those who are there are the most qualified for their positions.

Rev. Dr Tveit also reflected on how we can create opportunities for leadership so that in the long term we can recruit for senior leadership.

Dr Quawas shared that the first qualification needs to be having the right competencies. If all things are equal, then we can look at the confession. He noted that we currently have Muslims on staff from a country where there are also Christians, such as Egypt. There are three people from the same country in the Middle East: Lebanon. Still, the first qualification must be their competency.

Rev. Cora Antonio Matamoros shared that although the qualifications are important, it is also important that if the person is not Christian that at least they should come to be part of a body of a church. Looking at the list, there is only one staff person from Latin America. In Busan, this was one of the things extensively discussed. Delegates at the assembly were concerned about the geographical balances of people working in the WCC office. From Latin America, it would be good if one person can be nominated if they have the qualifications.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that since figures are mentioned, we should be correct. There are currently three programme executives from Latin America, and at least 2-3 people from Latin America in other categories. He also wishes there were more from the region, but he notes that there is more than one on staff.

Dr Abuom summarized by saying that more needs to be done towards regional and confessional balances, even as we consider qualifications. It is important to note that the WCC will never have every little confessional family represented. However we need to think about how we value every member and work with staff across the board.

Ms Winbush advised caution when using competency language. Competency language is often used as code language in North America to privilege white men. In ecumenical circles, it could be used to privilege Europeans. She believes that there is competence in every region where there are WCC member churches. There is competence throughout the world. Perhaps the executive committee needs to do some work around the implicit biases that may be operating, and we could take some time do this. She would strongly suggest that competence is not the only issue.

Rev. Dr Tveit noted that in the rules and regulations they have also defined different dimensions of qualifications for staff. It is well-balanced language because it is about different types of qualifications and not just professional qualifications, also experience and representational. The general secretary has

noted the clear instructions to the executive committee and to the general secretary that we take this into consideration.

He continued and said that he does not want to take the language of competency in a narrow sense. However he does want to affirm competencies in terms of people knowing the ecumenical movement, knowing their regions, and knowing their churches. Overall, we need to look at how all balances are covered.

Rev. Dr Bae supported what Rev. Robina Winbush stated and asked specifically about the the composition of the Bossey faculty. Rev. Dr Tveit shared that Bossey faculty are professors, and they have to be recognized by the University of Geneva as qualified professors; this is the agreement that we have with the university. There is a clear demand for academic qualifications.

He went on to name the Bossey faculty as follows:

- Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, director (Romanian Orthodox Church), Romania
- Rev. Dr Benjamin Simon, professor of ecumenical missiology (EKD-Evangelical Church in Baden), Germany
- Dr Amélé Ekué, professor of ecumenical social ethics (EKD-Evangelical Church in Germany), Germany
- Rev. Dr Dagmar Heller, professor of ecumenical theology (EKD-Evangelical Church in Germany), Germany
- Rev. Fr Dr Lawrence Iwuamadi, professor of ecumenical biblical hermeneutics (Roman Catholic Church), Nigeria
- Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus, professor of ecumenical theology (Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil), Brazil
- Rev. Dr Martin Robra, professor of social ethics (EKD-Evangelical Church of Westphalia), Germany

Dr Abuom brought the session to a close. Bishop Simo Peura offered a prayer to close the session.

8.3 Action on the Report of the Staffing, Personnel, and Nominations Sub-Committee

Dr Abuom moderated a decision session.

She invited Bishop Simo Peura to present the report.

8.3.1 REVIEW OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY (DOC. NO. 01)

The sub-committee received the *Report of the General Secretary* with appreciation.

Members of the sub-committee were invited to offer their contribution in drafting a letter from the general secretary to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) in recognition of the event in Lund.

Discussion

Comments were received on the draft letter.

This letter was approved by consensus (full text of the letter is included in Appendix VII).

8.3.2 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS (DOC. NO. 18)

(a) New Member Churches

The sub-committee recommends that:

i) The executive committee **take** note of the follow up that has been done since the last meeting of the central committee with regard to
   i. the three churches admitted as full WCC member churches (Dutch Reformed Church; Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India; Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Blantyre Synod) and
   ii. the two churches admitted to participate in the work of the WCC and interact with the local fellowship of member churches for an interim period, until the next central committee in 2018 (The Africa Brotherhood Church; Baptist Community in Central Africa).

These recommendations were approved by consensus.

(b) Suspension of the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu (Kimbanguist Church) from WCC fellowship

In addition to the documents received and discussed during the plenary, the sub-committee received and discussed a letter sent by H.E. Simon Kimbangu Kiangani, spiritual head and legal representative, to the general secretary informing that the church had been made aware of the decision of the central committee in Trondheim and that their member of the central committee had not been able to attend because of difficulties related to the Schengen visa. The letter stated that

> "The Kimbanguist Church does not intend to leave the World Council of Churches. The Kimbanguist Church is rather proud to be part of it and considers it important and necessary to belong to the large Christian family since the Kimbanguist Church is Christian and one of the first independent churches in black Africa, member of the WCC since 1969. Hence, I cannot betray the oath of faithfulness of my predecessors who confirmed the belonging of the Kimbanguist Church to the WCC and I have to respect the prerogatives of the effective unity in diversity of our

faithful. For this is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ expressed in his prayer in John 17:20-23." (unofficial translation from the French)

The sub-committee discussed extensively the two issues on its agenda: (a) the follow up to the suspension of the Kimbanguist Church, and (b) the need to clarify the questions raised when the membership of a church is suspended, particularly because this provision is new in the WCC Rules.

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee

ii) **urge** the general secretary to accelerate the process of dialogue with the Kimbanguist Church with the aim of reaching an agreement – as stipulated by the WCC Rules – before the next assembly, as requested by the central committee. The All African Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Organization of Africa Instituted Churches (OAIC), the ecumenical partners that have been involved with the WCC since the beginning, should continue being part of the process.

iii) **encourage** the general secretary to prepare some clarifications to the questions raised when the membership of a church is suspended, for further discussion by both the executive committee and the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration (PCCC).

Discussion

Metropolitan Gennadios clarified that the Kimbanguist delegation did not come to Geneva because of problems with the Schengen visa. He asked if they have been invited again and noted that, most likely, they will not be able to come to Geneva because of the visa.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that since the central committee meeting in June, the general secretary issued a letter to them informing them about the decision, and letting them know that a process has been initiated about the process for suspension and reminding them about the rules. A meeting with them needs to happen in the near future. It is not impossible for them to get a visa for Switzerland if they apply in due time. He also believes that it is possible to convene a meeting before the next central committee meeting, either in the Democratic Republic of Congo or in another African country such as Kenya.

Dr Abuom summarized that the main follow up since June has not been done. Only the information has been sent to the church. The executive committee asked the general secretary to speed up the process.

Rev. Dr Kamba Kasongo shared that the visa is not a problem for all of these people to come. But it is a problem for the person who is in charge of ecumenical matters. This person knows very well the issues of ecumenical relations. This is why they could not exchange for another person. This means that if the meeting has to be only in Geneva, then nothing will happen. But if, as the general secretary proposed, the meeting can happen in another African country, then a meeting will be possible.

<u>These recommendations were approved by consensus.</u>

(c) Change of name of a member church

Due to change in membership within the Mennonite Church in Germany, the name of the member church is changed from "**Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden**" (one of the founding members of the WCC, recorded in the list of member churches, in English, as "The Mennonite Church in

Germany") into **"Association of Mennonite Congregations in Germany"** (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland).

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

iv) **take note** of this change with the understanding that the new name will be recorded in the list of member churches.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

(d) Application of the Amity Foundation to be recognized as an international ecumenical organization (IEO) in working relationship with the WCC

The sub-committee had the privilege of listening to Ms Theresa Cariño and Ms Xie Min presenting a report on the Amity Foundation and asking them questions about the work of the foundation. The sub-committee strongly affirmed that working relations with the Amity Foundation should be formalized.

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

v) **welcome** the application of the Amity Foundation to be recognized as an international ecumenical organization "with which the World Council of Churches has working relationships" and refer the application to the next central committee for a final decision;
vi) **invite** the general secretary to further explore with the Amity Foundation the best constitutional frame (i.e. whether a "Specialized Ministry" or an "IEO") that would best serve the interests of the two parties.

These recommendations were approved by consensus.

8.3.3 NOMINATIONS (DOC. NO. 17)

(a) Central Committee

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

i) **instruct** the general secretary to forward the names of Bishop Jan Janssen (EKD), Bishop Teresa Snorton (Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, USA) and Rev. Dr Jeffrey W. Carter (Church of the Brethren, USA) to the central committee at its meeting in June 2018, and to invite them to participate in the central committee meeting in 2018.
ii) **express** its regret that, when suggesting replacements for governing bodies, member churches do not always respect the profile of the outgoing member (particularly if women, youth and lay) resulting in the enlarging of the already existing unbalances.
iii) **ask** the general secretary to intensify efforts in inviting the Church of the Province of West Africa and the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) to propose replacements for the vacancies in the WCC central committee in 2018.

Discussion

Metropolitan Gennadios proposed the addition of "for confirmation" to recommendation (i).

That revised recommendation now reads:

i) **instruct** the general secretary to forward the names of Bishop Jan Janssen (EKD), Bishop Teresa Snorton (Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, USA) and Rev. Dr Jeffrey W. Carter (Church of the Brethren, USA) for confirmation to the central committee at its meeting in June 2018, and to invite them to participate in the central committee meeting in 2018.

These recommendation was approved by consensus.

(b) Executive Committee

The executive committee took note that, following the resignation of Dr Ulysses Burley (M/Y/L), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in consultation with other WCC member churches in North America, put forward the name of Rev. Robina Winbush (F/O) from the Presbyterian Church (USA) to replace him on the executive committee. Following the decision of the central committee in Trondheim, Norway (June 2016), she would be also rotating onto the executive committee as of January 2018.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

(c) Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

iv) **instruct** the general secretary to forward the name of Bishop Jan Janssen (EKD) to the central committee at its meeting in June 2018 for confirmation, and to invite him to participate in the next meeting of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration in 2017.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

(d) Assembly Planning Committee

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

v) **instruct** the general secretary to forward the name of Bishop Jan Janssen (EKD) to the central committee at its meeting in June 2018 for confirmation, and to invite him to participate in the next meeting of the assembly planning committee in 2017.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

(e) Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA)

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

vi) **instruct** the general secretary to forward the name of Rev. Jeffrey W. Carter (Church of the Brethren, USA) to the central committee at its meeting in June 2018, and to invite him to participate in the CCIA meeting in 2017 as a substitute.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

(f) Steering Committee for the real estate development

The general secretary observed that the membership of the committee should be strengthened both because the importance of the matters brought to the attention of the committee and the difficulties in reaching a quorum (as experienced both in Trondheim and Nanjing).

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

vii) **support** the proposal of the general secretary to forward the name of Rev. Dr Paul Gardner (Moravian Church in Jamaica & The Cayman Islands) to the central committee at its meeting in June 2018; and instruct him to invite Dr Gardner to participate in the future meetings of the steering committee.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

8.3.4 ASSEMBLY PREPARATIONS (DOC. NO. 20)

The sub-committee discussed the three questions raised by the document. The executive committee was informed that there are other churches working on potential invitations. Therefore, the general secretary is asked to explore if other member churches are ready to formalize their invitation by extending the deadline to 1 March 2017. The general secretary is also asked to consult with EKD before a new deadline is offered to member churches, and to give a progress report to the leadership of the central committee, meeting in March 2017.

Discussion

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that he was asked to make contact with EKD, and in particular to reach Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (EKD-Evangelical Church in Germany). He was able to talk with her the day before, and she understood very well the questions raised, and had no objections to the time limit being extended for churches to issue formal invitations. He noted that given that, it may not be necessary that is mentioned here, since the conversation has already happened, and it would be a clear and more understandable text without the reference to the EKD.

Further, there is only one firm option, and this is why he consulted with the EKD. Extending the deadline is not a problem at all.

Bishop Swenson shared that she had conversations with the church in Britain and they are having further conversation about whether they can pull together a proposal.

Several suggestions on the wording of the recommendation were made and the revised recommendation and preceding text now reads as:

> The sub-committee discussed the questions raised by the document. The executive committee was informed that there are other churches working on a potential invitation. The general secretary is asked to give a progress report to the leadership of the central committee (LCC), meeting in March 2017.
>
> The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee
>
> i) **extend** the deadline to 1 March 2017.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

8.3.5 DRAFT APPLICATION OF THE POSTAL OR ELECTRONIC VOTE (DOC. NO. 21)

The sub-committee had an extensive discussion on the paper presented. Part of it was not considered necessary by the sub-committee. Members of the sub-committee cautioned that proliferating the explanations of the constitutional provisions might be rather confusing and counter-productive.

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

i) **take note** that Rule XVIII.8 provides a clear and sufficient frame for the general secretary to launch processes of consultation and decision using electronic communication.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

8.3.6 CENTRAL COMMITTEE EVALUATION BY MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS (DOC. NO. 19)

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

i) **receive** with appreciation the evaluation of the central committee meeting in Trondheim.
ii) **suggest** the improvement of the evaluation of governing bodies meetings in the future (e.g. exploring the use of online electronic forms; making forms as simple as possible; distributing forms earlier; allocating and respecting allocated time for evaluation at each meeting, etc.).

Discussion

Metropolitan Gennadios suggested that in the wording we “receive with appreciation the evaluation”, the word “appreciation” is rather strong.

Rev. Dr Tveit clarified that there are two different perspectives here. We are grateful and appreciate the fact that the meeting was in Trondheim. However, we are not happy that so few evaluations were received. We should make it clearer.

Dr Quawas shared that transparency is important. He suggests that we pinpoint to our colleagues in the central committee that they need to be more active in participating in the evaluation. We should probably

add: “the executive committee receives with sorrow”.

Mr Lemopoulos shared that this should be an introductory comment, and not a recommendation. It is a narrative part that could be offered, such as: “the sub-committee noted with concern that very few responses were received to the evaluation”. He added that we can add that we express our joy and satisfaction for the meeting itself; the joy should be expressed before the concern. These changes were approved.

The revised recommendation and preceding text now read as follows:

> The sub-committee confirmed with joy and satisfaction that the overall evaluation of the meeting was quite positive and the venue was excellent. It noted with concern, however, that very few responses were received to the evaluation.
>
> The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:
>
> i) **suggest** the improvement of the evaluation of governing bodies meetings in the future (e.g. exploring the use of online electronic forms; making forms as simple as possible; distributing forms earlier; allocating and respecting allocated time for evaluation at each meeting, etc.).

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

8.3.7 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF (DOC. NO. 16)

The sub-committee appreciated the fact that the general secretary had shared with the executive committee the draft of the Code of Conduct for advice. The sub-committee also appreciated that the Gender Advisory Group had contributed to the preparation of this Code.

With the aim of improving the text, suggestions were offered to the general secretary with regard to the use of some terms (e.g. rules; ethical/moral) and the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the Code.

The sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

iii) **express** to the general secretary its appreciation for the preparation of the Code of Conduct.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

The whole report of the sub-committee on staffing, personnel and nominations was approved by consensus.

9. Central Committee Meetings and Executive Committee Meetings

9.1 Evaluation of the Central Committee Meeting; Trondheim, Norway, June 2016

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited Mr Lemopoulos to present the results of the evaluation of the June 2016 central committee meeting.

It was noted that following the meeting of the central committee in Trondheim, Norway in June 2016, there were evaluations from three different perspectives. While the full text of each evaluation is appended, a few points are highlighted and a few comments are added here to give only a taste of each evaluation.

(1) Evaluation by members and participants in the central committee

In general terms the overall evaluation of the meeting is quite positive. However, one could regret that only 27 members and participants filled the questionnaire, offering their assessment and comments. In more than one response, four points are underlined:

- The venue was excellent, the welcome was wonderful and the hospitality exceptional. The invitation of the Church of Norway and the contributions of the Norwegian Church Aid were highly appreciated.
- The spiritual life of the meeting was profound and prayer services meaningful and inspiring to many.
- The (many) documents should, whenever possible, be made available earlier.
- It would be helpful to have a more specific and annotated agenda for the meeting.
- The staff of the WCC is appreciated for their helpfulness and support.

(2) Consensus

It is very encouraging that participants expressed their general appreciation for the moderation of the sessions and the clear use of consensus procedures.

One of the comments reported above is repeated in the consensus evaluation too. Some participants did express the need for an annotated agenda, especially when it comes to business/decision sessions, e.g. order of committee reports to be discussed.

(3) Stewards' programme evaluation

The assessment of the programme is quite affirmative, stewards being positive in general terms, if not enthusiastic, with the opportunity given to them to attend a central committee meeting.

Since the programme is intended to be, above all, an exercise of ecumenical formation for the younger generation, it might be interesting to share here (verbatim) which learnings/ideas stewards will take home to implement in their own context:

- Discuss how people with disabilities could be included in organization work.
- I know now the churches are far more concerned with global issues than I thought.

- Great learning in building youth work, team spirit and professionalism in ecumenical movement.
- I would like to take the idea of consensus home. My church could really need that and the view that we belong together with all Christians, something that's not always obvious.
- Since I'm living in the Sami area I'll bring the info and contacts I made here. Also the new games I learned and the info about youth work in WCC, ECHOS, etc.
- Games we played in the cultural evening, ecumenical hymns, discussions for example about volunteers in the church.
- I will feel more inspired to do the work I'm doing already because now I know there is a lot of people who are work for the same.
- Everything! From how to form a document, host a meeting, WCC, ecumenical issues.
- The pilgrimage of justice and peace! In many different ways. I will also passionately talk about the ecumenical movement :)
- An activist perspective on churches role in society, an inclusive perspective on humans from a theological point of view.
- Everything I learned, I believe will be very useful so I will try to use it when necessary.
- I will utilize what I learned about women's challenges in a global context, and also now to create a safe space for women to share and encourage each other.
- The idea of Christian-Muslim dialogue based on a) trust, b) confidence.
- Creating safe space in the church for women to talk about their issues.

After hearing the report, the group discussed the evaluation process. Mr Lemopoulos expressed concern about the few evaluation forms that were received: there were only 27 received out of 200 possible ones. Dr Abuom reflected that the forms were given out late in the meeting and they were not collected in an organized way. She asked if we could look into those issues.

Ms Antonio Matamoros noted that the evaluation sheet must be given in advance with plenty of time so that people can work on it.

Rev. Dr Gardner shared that he normally has this same challenge of receiving few evaluations from meetings that he facilitates. He says that in his context, they have a set time for it to be completed during the meeting itself. They usually allow for at least ten minutes to do it. The evaluation should also not be given out too early in the meeting. He reflected that it is important to monitor when the evaluation is given out, how it is given out, and how it is collected. It is a question of when it is done and how it is done. We need to be deliberate and it is a matter of process. He noted that the paper for evaluation could get lost in a meeting where there are lots of other papers.

Ms Winbush asked whether there had been any exploration of doing the evaluation electronically.

Metropolitan Gennadios reflected that we need to explore why people are not filling out the evaluation form. Perhaps a paper form is now old fashioned; we need to look at other ways of engaging people in evaluation. He added the evaluation should be done electronically instead of trying to complete the paper form there.

Dr Abuom summarized that the executive committee was making an appeal to look at various forms of evaluation.

Mr Lemopoulos clarified that, as staff, they have tried to include a special time for evaluation on all meetings either of the executive or the central committee, and to have an evaluation in plenary. He confessed that they failed in all their attempts and as staff they gave up because it was not working. He shared that if there are other ideas about this, or if the executive committee wants to force staff to put it on the agenda or to stick with that item on the agenda, they will hear it. Normally in all the meetings, however, the evaluation is near the end when they are receiving many reports, and the time for evaluation gets sacrificed.

Secondly in terms of an electronic survey, Mr Lemopoulos noted that they can do this, but is not necessarily confident that it will work. They have sent electronic surveys to 700 people and only gotten 30 responses from that total. He wondered if there is something here: maybe a matter of discipline in terms of responding.

Mrs Nelyubova shared her experience about evaluations at home. She stated that there are two types of evaluation forms. One type are the easy ones, where you simply tick off boxes. The other type is when you have to fill in long forms, and when you have to think to fill in long answers; this requires brain energy. We need to consider that as soon as you include questions where people need to write in things themselves, then it will immediately lower the number of responses. She reflected that we also need to think of a good place on the agenda of each meeting so that in one session we distribute and also give time for filling in the evaluation forms.

Dr Abuom noted that on the whole, the central committee was happy with the venue and community building. But, now we need to think about what role evaluation plays, and what is the best mechanism to give us feedback for future meetings.

Rev. Dr Tveit shared that we can reflect more on the methodology of how we do this. If this can be combined with a conversation so that members feel they will have an impact on future meetings by doing the evaluation, then they may participate more. He suggested that we should test an electronic evaluation for the next central committee meeting to see; they will first discuss this as staff.

The general secretary reflected that reading the evaluation forms, even if it is only 27 participants, it is still very strong feedback to colleagues. He wants to receive this and affirm it. He sees this as a strong affirmation about what colleagues are doing, how to perform the meeting, and how to fulfil their role to make it work.

Rev. Dr Tveit commented that it was a blessing for his church, the diocese, the country, and for ecumenical work in the country that you accepted the invitation to have the central committee meeting in Trondheim. It also meant a great deal for the work related to pilgrimage. He remarked that just last week, they found the altar on which St Olav was laid. This has been a mystery for 500 years. Now they will continue the search for his tomb.

Finally, the general secretary offered appreciations for how the executive committee members participated in the central committee meeting. He reflected that how the executive participated was a strong affirmation of the fellowship, and helped create a good atmosphere for participants.

9.2 Planning Future Governing Body Meetings with 2017-2021 Overview

The executive committee is asked to note the following dates which have already been confirmed.

2017		
CC Leadership	February	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	~~5-10 June~~ 7-12 June *(changed following meeting)*	Bossey, Switzerland
CC Leadership	18-20 October	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	17-23 November	Amman, Jordan
2018		
CC Leadership	March/April	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	13-14 June	Geneva, Switzerland
Central Committee	15-21 June	Geneva, Switzerland
Assembly Planning Committee	22-25 June	Geneva, Switzerland
CC Leadership	September	Geneva, Switzerland

The executive committee affirmed the dates for the November 2018 meeting; this information will be communicated to the new members who will be rotating onto the executive.

2018		
Executive Committee (in conjunction with ACT Alliance Assembly)	(1) 2-8 November 1 November is joint consultation	tbd

Other dates

2019		
CC Leadership	February	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	May/June	tbd
CC Leadership	August	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	November	tbd
2020		
CC Leadership	January	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	Mar/April	Bossey, Switzerland
Executive Committee	June/July (2 days)	Geneva, Switzerland
Central Committee	June/July	Geneva, Switzerland
CC Leadership	August	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	November	tbd
2021		
CC Leadership	Jan/Feb	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	May/June	Geneva/Bossey, Switzerland
Assembly		tbd

10. Closing Actions

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session.

Dr Abuom shared an issue that had been raised by Metropolitan Gennadios. She the executive committee is an accountable boy, asked to carry out the work of the central committee in between meetings. Unless there are very special circumstances, Dr Abuom advised that members' participation should be froe the whole meeting, from the very beginning to the very end. It is especially important when we are invited to regions by member churches – we should expect an extended meeting because of times of fellowship and meeting with the churches together on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Rev. Dr Tveit affirmed what Dr Abuom has said. He noted that each year, one executive meeting is planned in Geneva and one meeting outside of Geneva. The meetings that take place outside of Geneva are an investment from the Council in terms of it taking more time, it being more work and a more demanding enterprise; additionally, it is also a welcome sign of hospitality from those who are hosting us.

The general secretary asked that these remarks are specifically reflected in the minutes. He noted that it is important that we honour the fellowship and the contributions from those who are hosting us, and the work of staff that is extended by this practice. Even more important, it is about giving leadership to the Council, not only in a narrow sense of making decisions, but also in terms of monitoring the fellowship.

He offered some additional information. First, he noted that after this executive meeting, the leadership of the central committee (LCC) will meet with the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) in Beijing. Following that, Rev. Dr Tveit will travel back to Europe via Seoul, to visit WCC staff colleague, Rev. Dr Dong-Sung Kim (programme executive, human dignity and diakonia). Dr Kim has not been able to work since the beginning of this year because he is being treated for cancer. He asked for the prayers of the central committee meeting, and noted that words of support are invited; executive committee members will have an opportunity to write words of encouragement to the staff colleague, and Rev. Dr Tveit will deliver them when he sees him in Seoul.

In Seoul, Rev. Dr Tveit will also meet with Rev. Dr Sang Chang, the WCC president for Asia, and they will together meet with Rev. Dr Sam Whan Kim, the former chair of the host committee for the Busan Assembly. In addition, the WCC general secretary will meet with Rev. Dr Young-Ju Kim, the general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea. These meetings are possible because he is in the region.

Finally, he spoke an issue that was raised by Rev. Cora Antonio Matamoros voicing concerns from her region. It was announced that this week the temperature in the North Pole is 20 degrees higher than usual at this point. In addition, the President-Elect of the United States has moderated his stand on withdrawing from the climate change agreement. Our statement on climate change, therefore, is very timely.

10.1 APPRECIATIONS

Dr Abuom sincerely expressed the gratitude of the executive committee to the hosts and to the member church for such a wonderfully warm welcome. She shared that the committee was in facilities that enabled us to do our work well, and also allowed the committee to see the work of the church. For those of us who went to church on Sunday, as well as to also the exposure visits to Amity Printing Press and the

Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, we are very grateful for the hospitality that was extended to us, and to the many people who attended to our logistical needs. She commented that no one has felt excluded - when we had a question, there was always someone who could attend to what we needed. She asked that our appreciation be extended to stewards, hosts, and all others who enabled us to have a window into church life in this nation.

Dr Abuom noted that we also want to leave with the impression that our relationship with the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is deeper and broader than before. Being the first governing organ of the WCC to meet here in China, she shared that we leave with more information, so as to pray in a better way together and to be pilgrims in the next stage, having come in a step forward.

Sincere thanks were offered to Rev. Kan Baoping for extending the invitation for making it very possible for the executive committee to come here and be part of this fellowship. The executive committee expressed their appreciation with a round of applause.

Dr Abuom offered gifts of appreciations to the overseas relations department, which organized the meeting on behalf of the CCC:

- Elder Ou Enlin
- Ms Shi Meiying
- Mr. Fang Ye (Tony)
- Rev. Kan Baoping, general secretary

Dr Abuom noted that without the WCC staff and our general secretary to manage them, the work of the executive committee would not go very far. Because of the staff's commitment to work of the WCC, they have served us beyond the call of duty. She asked that we extend our gratitude to the associate general secretaries, the directors, and all staff. Thank you very much. She expressed that all of the committee's documents were received in a timely manner and the staff have been there throughout the sub-committee meetings, and whenever there were questions.

She also thanked the general secretary who helped keep everyone on track, for his dedicated service and for his team.

She also wanted to thank the members of the executive committee for coming. She noted that for some people it was a very long journey and a very long executive meeting, but everyone stayed focused and awake. She asked that we would keep the same team spirit in future. She noted that we are seeing a deeper team spirit and team work. Thanks to everyone.

She expressed sincere thanks to the minute-taker, Ms Adele Halliday.

She also wanted to deeply appreciate the work of the deputy general secretary, Mr Georges Lemopoulos. She hopes that even after he leaves the WCC with his retirement, that he will still be available to us.

Finally, she thanked the leadership of the central committee (LCC), H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima, Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson, and Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit for being gracious to her, for and supporting her, and for working with her as the moderator. She wished everyone God's mercies as we journey back home.

Metropolitan Gennadios also offered appreciations to Dr Abuom for her leadership.

She asked that everyone remember the central committee members as well as the executive committee members who left early. The earth is groaning; we are faced with major challenges. As we journey together and pray together, she asked that we remember those who are calling on God. Dr Abuom recalled a chorus in Kenya: “you know me by my name, you have seen my suffering, and you have heard my prayer”. She closed by sharing her hope that on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace we will know each other by name and also know pain, suffering, and also joy.

She closed by sharing that in this advent season, may Christ be born in our hearts afresh.

10.2 CLOSING

Bishop Swenson offered a prayer to close the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 am.

APPENDIX I: PARTICIPANTS LIST

Leadership	Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima, vice-moderator Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson, vice-moderator Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary
Members	Rev. Cora Luisa Antonio Matamoros Dr Abba Haile Mariam Melese Ayenew H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae Rev. Dr Paul Gardner Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang Rev. Dr Micheline Kamba Kasongo Rev. Baoping Kan Ms Martina Viktorie Kopecká Rev. Taaroanui Maraea Mrs Margarita Nelyubova Bishop Simo Peura Dr Audeh B. Quawas Rev. Dr Michael Tita Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins
Advisers	Dr Mathews George, Christian Conference of Asia Dr John Nduna, ACT Alliance
Apologies	H.G. Archbishop Nareg Alemezian Bishop Samuel Robert Azariah Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko Bishop John F. White
Minute-Writer	Ms Adele Halliday
Staff	Ms Catherine Christ-Taha Ms Elaine Dykes Ms Marianne Ejdersten Mr Mark Johnson Mr Georges Lemopoulos Prof. Dr Isabel Phiri Mr Peter Prove Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca Dr Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

APPENDIX II: MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Programme

Rev. Cora Luisa Antonio Matamoros
Dr Agnes Abuom
Dr Abba Haile Mariam Melese Ayenew
Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber
Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat- Lebang
Rev. Dr Micheline Kamba Kasongo
Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou
Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins (mod)

Advisers
Dr Mathews George (CCA)
Dr John Nduna (ACT Alliance)

Apologies:
Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang

Public Issues

Dr Agnes Abuom
Rev. Cora Luisa Antonio Matamoros
Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae
Dr Mathews George
Rev. Taaroanui Maraea
Dr John Nduna
Dr Audeh B. Quawas (mod)
Rev. Dr Michael Tita

Finance

H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (mod)
Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae
Rev. Dr Paul Gardner
Rev. Taaroanui Maraea
Mrs Margarita Nelyubova
Bishop Mary Ann Swenson

Apologies:
Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev
Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko

Staffing, Personnel and Nominations

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (mod)
Rev. Baoping Kan
Ms Martina Viktorie Kopecká
Bishop Simo Peura
Dr Audeh B. Quawas
Rev. Dr Michael Tita
Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit

Apologies:
H.G. Archbishop Nareg Alemezian
Bishop Samuel Robert Azariah
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste
Bishop John F. White

APPENDIX III: GENERAL SECRETARY VISITS AND MEETINGS FROM JUNE TO NOVEMBER 2016

WCC GS Travels

DATE	PLACE	PURPOSE
July 1-2	Munich, Germany	Together for Europe Event – participate in Round Table and speaker at public event.
August 18-23	Kaduna, Abuja, Lagos, Nigeria	- **Kaduna**: Launch of the International Centre for Inter-Faith Peace and Harmony - **Abuja**: Meet church leaders and high level government officials - **Lagos**: 80th TABIEORAH Celebration of The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide - Visit to the Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide and Methodist Church in Nigeria
August 31-September 2	Houston, Texas, USA	World Methodist Council – keynote speaker at ecumenical dinner
September 2-6	New York, USA	- Service at The Riverside Church of New York - Meeting with Rabbi David Sandmel and Martin Budd from IJCIC, accompanying the GS: Rudelmar Bueno de Faria and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian - Lunch with H.E. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos, Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and other ecumenical leaders
September 7-9	Sao Paulo, Brazil	- Pentecostal World Fellowship Assembly - Meeting with Brazilian Church leaders
September 11-13	Washington, USA	Consultation on the Holy Land
September 18-20	Assisi, Italy	International Meeting on Peace; led the Christian prayer with H.H. Pope Francis, the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch
September 21-22	Brussels, Belgium	Meeting of the Jewish Christian Dialogue group
October 4-17	New Zealand-Aotearoa and Australia	Official visit **New Zealand-Aotearoa:** Auckland, Dunedin and Christchurch Visited member churches; meetings with government officials, church and ecumenical leaders, and indigenous communities; gave public lectures and participated and preached at various church services, met with inter faith leaders, academics, and theological students. **Australia:** Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney

		Visited member churches and met with church and ecumenical leaders. Met political leaders in Canberra; indigenous leaders; participated and preached at church services. Delivered several public lectures; met with inter faith leaders, academics, and theological students
October 27- 28	Heidelberg and Karlsruhe, Germany	- Lecture at Heidelberg University - Meeting with Bishop Jochen Cornelius-Bundschuh
October 31-November 1	Lund, Sweden	Reform celebration with H.H. Pope Francis and LWF leadership
November 5	Rome, Italy	Palestine Mission reception on the occasion of the Lutheran-Catholic Common Prayer for the commemoration of the Reformation with H.G. Bishop Munib Younan

Meetings in Geneva

August 28	WCC	Mr Awad – Initiative for Humanitarian Dialogue
September 15	WCC	Met with Bishop and Deans of Gothenburg (Church of Sweden)
September 16	Bossey	Addressed meeting of the Joint Working Group with RCC
September 16	WCC	Courtesy visit of HE Hans Brattskar, Norway Ambassador to the UN
September 16	WCC	Visit of Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia
September 16	WCC and Bossey	Official farewell to Rev. Dr Hielke Wolters
September 28	WCC	Visit of Rev. André Milenge Mwenelwata, and distinguished guests from the DRC to discuss electoral process
September 28	WCC	Visit of Rev. Bob Fyffe, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
September 28	Ecumenical Centre	WCC-ACT joint meeting on "Our strategy on Religion and Development"
September 28	Maison de la Paix, Geneva	Side Event on: Peace Building from Below: The Role of Local Civil Society in South Sudan
September 29	WCC	Addressed the Working Group on Climate Change Meeting
September 30	WCC	LCC meeting
September 30-October 1	Ecumenical Centre, Intercontinental Hotel and Bossey	Official visit of the Grand Imam of Al Azhar with Council of Elders; dialogue meeting with the Grand Imam and lecture at Bossey for the 70th Anniversary
October 1-2	Bossey	70th Anniversary of Bossey
October 3	Domaine des Penthes (Geneva)	Luncheon debate with H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon
October 25	Ecumenical Centre	Maude Barlow, water activist – public event "WCC becoming a blue community"

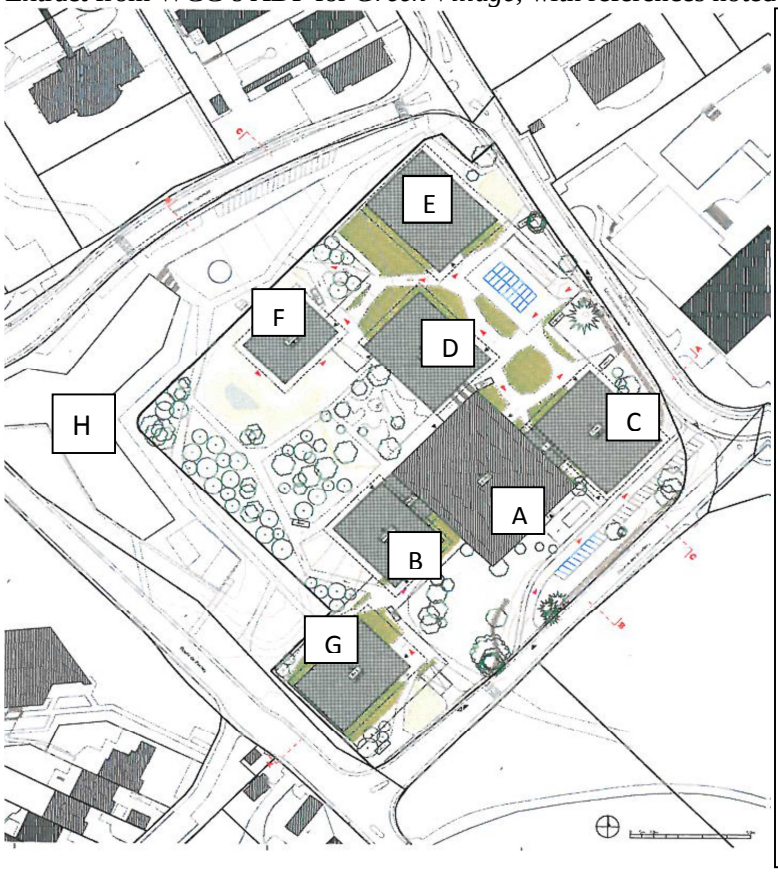
October 26	Ecumenical Centre	Addressed the Working Group on Interreligious Dialogue
October 26	Ecumenical Centre	"Interreligious dialogue in an age of violent fundamentalisms" lecture by Rev. Dr Sathianathan Clarke
October 27	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting with Ms Xie Ying of Amity Foundation
November 2	Café du Centre, Geneva	Dinner with Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (FEPS); Bishop Bedford-Strohm and other distinguished guests to launch start of the Reformation Anniversary Roadmap 2017
November 3	MIR - International Museum of the Reformation	Media Conference and ceremony for launch of the Reformation Anniversary Roadmap 2017 with - Member of Swiss Federal Council, Dr Alain Berset - Rev. Dr Gottfried Locher, president, Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches and Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford Strohm, Chairman Evangelical Church in Germany - Rev. Emmanuel Fuchs, president of l'Eglise protestante de Genève.
November 3	Ecumenical Centre	Panel discussion on initiatives and the role of Geneva as "Peace Capital" of the world. Co-organised by the WCC with the Protestant Church of Geneva, the International Museum of the Reformation and in collaboration with the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (FEPS)
November 7	Ecumenical Centre	All staff meeting on policies and procedures for conflict resolution and in case of allegation of personal integrity violation with external advisors.
November 7, 2016	Ecumenical Centre	Building project: presentation of PlanConsult's draft report.
November 8	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting with Implenia
November 9	Ecumenical Centre	Receive draft report from Mr Favarger, real estate consultant
November 10	Ecumenical Centre	Planning for Zimbabwe Solidarity Visit, May 2017. Discussion with: GS of ZCC, Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata and Zimbabwe Council of Churches' partners
November 11	Geneva and Beit Jala (Palestine)	Preliminary presentation EAPPI Evaluation Report
November 11	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting on Financial Architecture project with Rev. Chris Ferguson, WCRC; rev. Dr Martin Junge, LWF; Rev. Dr Collin Cowan, CWM (via Skype)
November 11	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting with Rev. Chris Ferguson, WCRC General Secretary
November 17	WCC	Meeting with Global Freedom Network General Secretary, Andrew Forrest

APPENDIX IV: UPDATE ON THE WCC BUILDING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The period of technical inquiry for the Area Development Plan was completed at the end of August 2016, with favourable preliminary opinion, subject to conditions detailed in the opinion itself, and following submission in November 2014.

The period of public inquiry was held from 30 August to 28 September 2016. During that period, a letter of observations was submitted by the local residents' group *Association Radar*, which has raised concerns related to potential traffic impact.

Extract from WCC's ADP for *Green Village*, with references noted for buildings



Green village

A: Offices and Chapel 4,245 sqm
B: Ecumenical Centre offices 7,935 sqm
C: Offices 12,640 sqm
D: Offices & commercial area 9,040 sqm
E: Offices 13,990 sqm
F: Apartments 6,010 sqm
G: Hotel-residence 7,840 sqm
Car park spaces: 585spaces

Campus Santé

H: *Global Fund's headquarters*, on neighbouring plot; and now under construction

Building project timeline
The timeline reported at central committee in June 2016 has been revised to reflect a further delay of one year in obtaining the Area Development Plan (ADP) compared with expectations at that time, as a result of the processes now required to address the observations raised. A commercial transaction might now be anticipated by mid-2019, rather than in 2017.

Next steps in process leading to ADP adoption
Formal response will be made by the department of urban planning to the observations raised by local residents. The Commune of Grand-Saconnex is to submit its opinion on the project within a defined time

period, normally by the end of January 2017. Formal opposition to the project may then be submitted to the State Council. A process of negotiation and adjustment of the Area Development Plan (ADP) would follow. The path to adoption of the ADP can also then include a formal appeal, and related judicial process.

Completion dates, estimated and actual					
		Actual	Development contract signed 30.5.12	Reported at central committee Jun-16	Revised Nov-16
Phase	**Description**				
0	Preparatory: assessment of buildings	31.12.12	30.9.12		
1	Architects' competition	31.10.13	30.6.13		
	Delivery of ADP to Canton	30.11.14	*30.9.13**		
2	Canton & Conseil d'Etat adopt ADP *iterative phases*		30.9.14	31.12.16	31.12.17
3	Building permit adopted		30.9.15	31.12.17	31.12.18
4	Financial objective for sale defined		31.12.15	30.11.17	31.1.19
5	Commercialisation; investor designated		31.3.16	31.12.17	30.6.19
6	Delivery of building		31.3.18	31.12.19	31.3.22

*Date not in development contract, but defined in the rules for the architects' competition as being 40 days after end of competition. Additional time was required because of State request to consider additional housing; and because of detailed traffic study required, given that the ADP includes more than 500 car park places.

Real estate consultancies and other reviews

In June 2016, following a review of an updated financial profile shared by Implenia in April 2016, the steering committee recommended that there be consultation with external consultants to assist the development of the sales strategy, and develop an overall risk assessment.

Following an offer for tender for the principal mandate in early October, three consultants were appointed to address the following:

- Verification and second opinion on Implenia's financial profile for *Green Village* (April 2016), checking project costs and other parameters;
- Assessment of the project return on a net present value basis, taking into account land lease, and ownership of different *Green Village* buildings;
- Strategy for the existing residential building; possible approaches for investment by member churches; depreciation policy; verification of estimates for new building operating costs; and
- Value-added tax impacts.

During the same period, a re-assessment of WCC office space needs was conducted, following the original project specification for the architects' competition in 2013, with a revised indication shared with the consultants and Implenia, based on needs reduced from 230 to 203 staff.

In addition, a review of rental contracts was conducted by staff, and a summary report shared with both Implenia and legal counsel, in preparation for a legal audit to be conducted in December.

Real estate consultancy meetings and presentations 7-9 November 2016
The reports from the consultants will be reviewed by the steering committee on 21 November 2016, with the objectives of determining the first steps in the sales strategy, and an approach to determining the general risk strategy.

The management summary from the consultancy reports is shared below:

Overall project view
The financial profiles reviewed by the steering committee in June 2016 remain materially unchanged;

- financing at a level of about CHF 60 million is required if WCC wishes to own buildings A, B and C, and repay CHF 24 million loan;
- if WCC owns A and C, then some financing is still required, estimated at CHF 10 million, mainly because of the renovation costs in building A.

A new lower-risk profile emerges, in which WCC might own building A and B, and could still meet the project objectives in terms of annual net income of CHF 3 million.

Land lease
Land lease should be negotiated, in order to retain ownership of the land, benefit from a steady income stream, but avoid the risk of owning buildings and financing construction.

Test the preferred investment models further
The net present value tool developed by the consultant allows assessment of the impact of risk factors, specifically: vacant offices, increased interest rates, reduced sales price or land lease rate. The recommended sales strategies require to be tested further, documenting impact of the risk factors.

Development of WCC's risk strategy
An assessment of WCC's risk strategy related to loans (debt/building cost); and to ownership of building types (residential building, hotel-residence, offices) is required, and may be developed with reference to the test results above.

Retain flexibility; the decision A, B and C; or A and C; or A and B is not required
Buildings E, F and G could be validated as ready to be marketed when the ADP is approved (most likely by June 2017), without other decision required at this stage. The next decision can depend on the financial outcome of these initial phases of the project, and resultant reimbursement of the CHF 24 million loan.

Possible investment by member churches
First review indicates some legal challenges for direct investment by member churches in buildings on the estate. There is time to conduct further legal inquiry before June 2017, when buildings E, F and G would be presented on the market for investor competition.

Other steps completed and in progress

6.7.16 Meeting with Grand-Saconnex local council, to discuss and address potential issues before submission of their preliminary opinion. Their concerns focused on obtaining confirmation that there would be right of way for pedestrians and cyclists on specific paths on the estate; and that the ADP would include the designated crèche, by name, on the plan document. Corrective actions were agreed and implemented.

22.9.16	General project meeting between WCC and Implenia
Sept-Oct	Review with legal counsel of a draft notarial act creating a right of pre-emption for Implenia, as a guarantee related to their work already invested in the project, and to be actioned only if WCC were to breach development contract terms, by negotiating sale of land without Implenia's joint agreement.
3.11.16	First meeting of WCC staff working group on the mobility plan, with the objective of reducing use of cars for individual commuter transport to the Ecumenical Centre.

APPENDIX V: STATEMENT ON CLIMATE JUSTICE

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it;
for he founded it on the seas and established it on the water". (Psalm 24)

On 4 November 2016 the agreement adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015 (COP 21) came into legal effect, after a rapid ratification process in which both China and the United States of America joined. The Paris Agreement commits countries to keeping the global temperature rise to below 2° Celsius, making every effort to limit the rise to the lower threshold of 1.5°. Under the terms of the agreement, developed countries shall support developing countries to adapt and grow in a clean and sustainable way, and to further develop ways of addressing loss and damage, including non-economic losses.

These were outcomes for which churches, the World Council of Churches, the ACT Alliance, the Lutheran World Federation, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Anglican Communion and many other faith-based and civil society organizations have long advocated. The Paris Agreement was widely welcomed and celebrated by the international community and civil society. The WCC especially welcomes the fact that this agreement better reflects a justice-oriented perspective on addressing the climate crisis, offering a long-awaited sign of hope to those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

As the WCC 10th Assembly in 2013 observed, victims of climate change are the new face of the poor, the widow and the stranger that are especially loved and cared for by God (Deut. 10:17-18). The 10th Assembly called on churches and ecumenical organizations to insist that their respective governments look beyond national interests in order to be responsible towards God's creation and our common future, and to urge them to safeguard and promote the basic human rights of those who are threatened by the effects of climate change.

Members of the ecumenical delegation attending the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh, 7-18 November 2016 (COP 22), called for COP 22 to translate the hope generated by the Paris Agreement into higher ambitions and concrete actions – noting that thus far the nationally determined commitments (NDCs) fall far short of what is needed to prevent the global temperature rise exceeding 2°, let alone the more ambitious 1.5° target. The ecumenical delegation also called for countries to initiate a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy including by ending fossil fuel subsidies and boosting investments in renewable energies, and for wealthier industrialized countries to support poorer developing countries in this transition through finance and technology transfer.

It was also in Marrakesh, 15 years ago during the COP 7 meeting, that the WCC organized a groundbreaking Colloquium on Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Environment and Climate Change. In that gathering, Muslims and Christians affirmed that *"faith communities unite to make peace with the Earth."* Since then interfaith dialogue and cooperation in response to the challenge of climate change have grown, contributing to the momentum that resulted in the Paris Agreement.

The WCC executive committee, meeting in Nanjing, China, 17-23 November 2016:

Reiterates the urgent concerns of churches around the world in relation to climate change and its adverse effects on the whole of creation, especially on vulnerable poor and indigenous communities, the irreversible ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity, the increased risk of social and political

tensions, conflict and displacement in a climate-constrained world, and the moral imperative of fossil fuel divestment and of investing in a low-carbon path to realizing economic, social and ecological wellbeing and sustainability for all Creation.

Reaffirms the central importance of continuing ecumenical advocacy and action for climate justice in the framework of the pilgrimage of justice and peace, and intensified interfaith cooperation for the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Acknowledges and welcomes the example offered by the government of China in its ratification of the Paris Agreement and in leading the world in investing in development of renewable energy, and ***encourages*** the government of China to show further global leadership by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris Agreement commitments.

Calls on all states to fulfil the commitments of the Paris Agreement, through local, national and international action and cooperation, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to stop deforestation, to ensure that the global temperature rise does not exceed 2° Celsius (striving for the lower target of 1.5°), and to increase investment in renewable energy technologies in order to achieve the target of 100% renewable energy by 2050.

Calls especially on rich industrialized countries to scale up support (including through technology transfer) and to fulfill the commitment to mobilize $100 billion per year for climate change mitigation and adaptation from 2020.

Expresses concern at the pledge by US President-elect Donald Trump to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, and calls on the US government to maintain and fulfil the commitments entailed in its ratification of this essential agreement.

Noting that climate change is already having adverse consequences on the very foundations of peoples' sustenance: water and food, ***welcomes and encourages*** the work of the WCC's Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) leading the WCC to becoming a 'Blue Community' (recognizing water as a human right, saying "No" to the sale of bottled water where tap water is safe to drink, and promoting publicly financed, owned and operated water and sewerage services), and of the WCC-Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) Food for Life campaign promoting food justice, the human right to food, and sustainable agro-ecological food production.

Expresses support for the work of the WCC ecological and economic justice (EEJ) programme to develop theological and educational activities on sustainable alternatives for poverty reduction and ecological justice (SAPREJ), underlining the necessity of changed lifestyles in order to address the root causes of climate injustice.

APPENDIX VI: LETTER TO THE CHINA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL AND THE THREE SELF PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT COMMITTEE

To the leadership and members of the China Christian Council and the Three Self Patriotic Movement Committee

Greetings to you and peace in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been privileged to meet during 17-23 November 2016 in Shanghai and Nanjing, at the kind invitation of the *China Christian Council* and the *Three Self Patriotic Movement Committee*. In inviting and hosting us here with such openness and generosity, you have extended your hospitality not only to us as individuals, but to the whole global ecumenical fellowship of churches on whose behalf we gather and work. We hope and pray that this meeting, and our exchanges with the leadership of your organizations, the Christian institutions, and with the authorities in this country will lead to closer relations, deeper ecumenical understanding of China, and to new commitments to our common Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

This is the first time a WCC governing body has met in the People's Republic of China, and through this experience we have gained enormously in our understanding of the current situation of the Chinese churches and nation. In addition to conducting the regular business of the Executive Committee, we met with your leadership, witnessed the institutions of the churches in action, and shared in worship and fellowship with Chinese sisters and brothers in Christ. We are grateful for your facilitation of the Executive Committee leadership's meeting with the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) of the Chinese government.

We also visited the Nanjing Massacre Memorial – a poignant and painful reminder of the scourge of war and of the human capacity for unspeakable violence and cruelty to fellow human beings. We shared in prayerful remembrance of the more than 300,000 victims of this massacre. We deeply regret that these atrocities have still not been recognized and apologized for by the Japanese government. This visit was another experience underlining the imperative of the pilgrimage of justice and peace, when such crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide are still taking place in our own times, depriving so many people of the peace, justice and development to which all aspire.

China has experienced enormous economic growth over the last decades of peace and stability in this country, the evidence of which is everywhere to be seen. Millions have been lifted out of poverty by this growth, raising renewed hope of the possibility of eradicating the most extreme forms of poverty globally. In addition, we have noted with appreciation China's example and leadership in ratifying the Paris Agreement on climate change and in scaling up its investment in developing renewable energy.
The growing gaps between rich and poor everywhere in the world must be addressed for the wellbeing of all and for the sustainability of the whole society. Environmental challenges as a side effect of increased economic activity, production, and transportation, are challenges for this country and for many others, pending the transition to a low carbon economy that all countries must make. And we are also conscious that China's rise in the global arena has been accompanied by new tensions and disputes, which we pray will be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

During our time with you in Shanghai and Nanjing, we have been inspired by seeing and hearing what the churches are doing in this country in their various ministries of witness and diakonia, in the context of

such progress and such challenges. We have been greatly impressed by the churches' outreach to people of all ages, the commitment to ecumenical and interfaith relations and cooperation, and the scale and breadth of the social services provided by the churches and their institutions.

Among the church-related institutions in China, the *Amity Foundation* already operates the world's largest bible printing service and has long been recognized as an important organization in the field of humanitarian and development work within China. It is a welcome sign of the growth and vitality of the churches in this country that *Amity Foundation* is expanding the scope of its diaconal service beyond China's borders. We welcome the fact that *Amity Foundation* – an ACT Alliance member – has established an office in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. We encourage deeper engagement by the *Amity Foundation* in the global diaconal ministry of the ecumenical movement.

We have been honoured and grateful to have been connected to the remarkable growth and development of the churches in this dynamic country through our fellowship with you during the many years of the Chinese churches' participation in the ecumenical movement. This visit has made it even clearer to us that the worldwide fellowship of churches will benefit greatly from further and increased mutual exchange, learning and cooperation between other WCC member churches and the churches and their institutions in China. We share the same Christian calling, and are together on a common ecumenical pilgrimage of justice and peace, seeking to promote just peace in the community, with the earth, in the marketplace, and among the nations.

We look forward to continuing on this pilgrim path with you, in China and in the wider world.

Yours in Christ,

(WCC Executive Committee Leadership)

APPENDIX VII: LETTER RE: A NEW STEP IN OUR COMMON PILGRIMAGE FOR UNITY

To
the President of the Pontificial Council for Promoting Christian Unity, HE Cardinal Kurt Koch
the President of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan
the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, Rev. Dr Martin Junge

Re: A New Step In Our Common Pilgrimage For Unity

1. The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, gathered in Shanghai and Nanjing, China, 17-23 November 2016, sends you its warm greetings as you have recently jointly commemorated 500 years of Reformation in Lund and Malmö, Sweden. We recognize the significance of the joint commitment signed by His Holiness Pope Francis and Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, president of the LWF, a moment in the history of your churches. We give thanks to God for such an important event for the Lutheran World Federation and for the Roman Catholic Church for your present and future relations.

2. We also acknowledge the significance of this joint commemoration for the wider ecumenical movement. Your commitment and your common way so far, expressed in the publication "From Conflict to Communion"[i] (joint PCPCU/LWF 2013 publication), is an inspiration to all that are involved in the ecumenical dialogues and the efforts towards visible unity of the Church, and for all that seek a common Christian witness and service for justice and peace in the world today.

3. We note that the commemoration was prepared and pursued in the spirit of being pilgrims together. Recognizing accountability for the divisions of the past, and mutual sharing of the gifts of the Gospel now, were done with a sense of humility and commitment to follow Jesus Christ together. The openness to one another and to how God is leading to new expressions of unity are signs of hope for the churches and for the world.

4. The World Council of Churches invites all churches to join us in a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. We find that the common prayer and commitment to the communion that you already share, is a visible expression of how this pilgrimage finds new forms and meaning.

5. We see that there is a need for renewing the challenges from Reformation in our time. There are so many examples of the imperative to address human sinfulness in an accountable way, and to search for real repentance from greed, from violence and from actions of injustice. We also see the urgency to renew together our commitment for sharing the message of the Gospel with all.

6. We share the call to transformation for justice and peace in so many contexts of the world. Inspired and empowered by the justice and peace of God, we continue our ecumenical pilgrimage together.

7. We give thanks to the Triune God for what happened, and pray for the further implementation of your commitments.

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[i] https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-conflict-communion-basis-lutheran-catholic-commemoration-reformation-2017